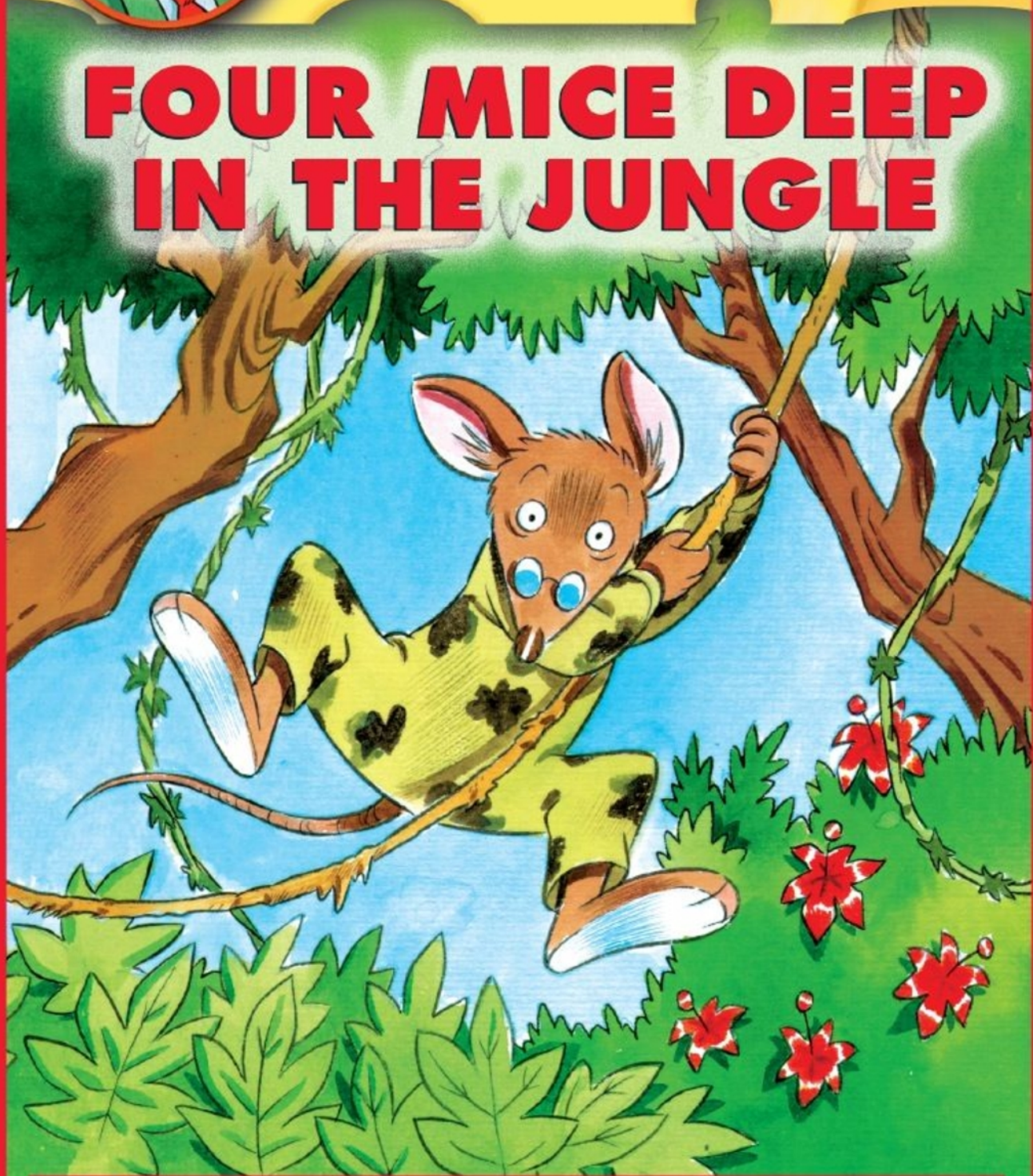




Geronimo Stilton

FOUR MICE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

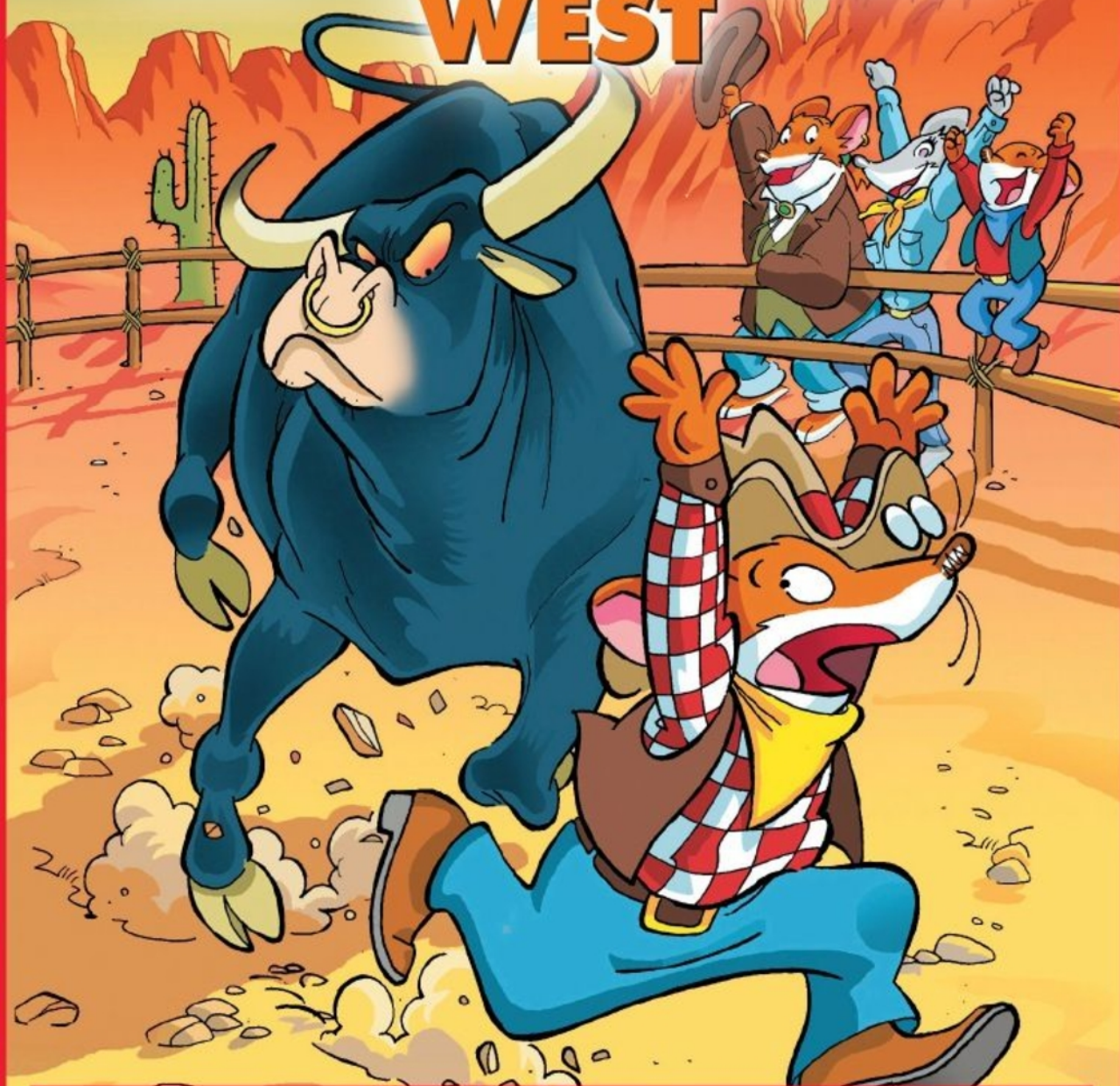


SCHOLASTIC



Geronimo Stilton

THE WILD, WILD WEST



SCHOLASTIC



Geronimo Stilton

FOUR MICE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE



SCHOLASTIC

Dear mouse friends,
Welcome to the world of



Geronimo Stilton



THE RODENT'S GAZETTE
EDITORIAL STAFF

A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration depicting a busy editorial office for 'The Rodent's Gazette'. The scene is set in a room with tall bookshelves filled with colorful books. In the center, a large wooden desk is cluttered with papers, a laptop, and a pizza. Several anthropomorphic mice are working at the desk: one is on a red rotary phone, another is using a laptop, and a third is eating a pizza. To the right, a mouse in a blue suit and tie is walking towards the center, holding a book. Another mouse in a yellow suit is standing near a large stack of books. In the foreground, a mouse is sitting on a large orange sofa, reading a newspaper. Other mice are scattered throughout the room: one is running with a folder, another is taking a photo with a camera, and a third is sitting on the floor with a box of papers. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, chaotic, and humorous workplace.



Geronimo Stilton

A learned and brainy
mouse; editor of
The Rodent's Gazette



Thea Stilton

Geronimo's sister and
special correspondent at
The Rodent's Gazette



Trap Stilton

An awful joker;
Geronimo's cousin and
owner of the store
Cheap Junk for Less



Benjamin Stilton

A sweet and loving
nine-year-old mouse;
Geronimo's favorite
nephew

Geronimo Stilton

FOUR MICE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE



Scholastic Inc.

New York Toronto London Auckland Sydney
Mexico City New Delhi Hong Kong Buenos Aires

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, please contact Atlantyca S.p.A., Via Leopardi 8, 20123 Milan, Italy; e-mail foreignrights@atlantyca.it, www.atlantyca.com.

eISBN 978-0-545-39167-2

Copyright © 2000 by Edizioni Piemme S.p.A., Corso Como 15, 20154 Milan, Italy.

International Rights © Atlantyca S.p.A.

English translation © 2004 by Atlantyca S.p.A.

GERONIMO STILTON names, characters, and related indicia are copyright, trademark, and exclusive license of Atlantyca S.p.A. All rights reserved. The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami.

www.geronimostilton.com

Published by Scholastic Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.
SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Stilton is the name of a famous English cheese. It is a registered trademark of the Stilton Cheese Makers' Association. For more information, go to www.stiltoncheese.com.

Text by Geronimo Stilton

Original title *Quattro topi nella giungla nera*

Original cover by Matt Wolf, revised by Larry Keys

Illustrations by Merenguita Gingermouse and Marina Bonanni

Special thanks to Kathryn Cristaldi

Cover design by Ursula Albano

Interior layout by Kay Petronio

First printing, March 2004



HOW SERIOUS IS IT, DR. SHRINKFUR?

I was lying on the psychiatrist's couch. It was made of soft, fluffy cat fur. But I wasn't very comfortable. I was worried.



"How serious is it, Dr. Shrinkfur?" I murmured, chewing my whiskers.

The doctor leaned back in his chair. "Ach, first I haff to know more," he squeaked in his funny accent. "Vhen did zis thing start?"

I sighed. I was never the bravest mouse on the block. In fact, I guess you could say I've always been a bit of a 'fraidy mouse. I've never enjoyed spooky holidays like Halloween. I hide in my mouse hole on the



BOO!

Fourth of July. Fireworks make me nervous. But lately, it seemed like everything was making me jumpy. “Well, at first I was only afraid to go to the dentist, but then I suddenly became afraid of  ELEVATORS .

Then came the fear of flying. That was followed by a fear of spiders,



snakes, closed spaces, and crowds.

After that I became afraid of heights and the dark.” I took a deep breath. Just talking about all of my fears was making me afraid! “Oh, yes, I almost forgot, Doctor,” I added. “I’m also afraid of *cats*!”

Dr. Shrinkfur waved his paw.

“You are a mouse, you haff to be afraid of *cats*!” he said.

I TWIRLED MY TAIL NERVOUSLY. Then I sat up. “Please, Dr. Shrinkfur,” I squeaked. “Give it to me straight.”



He shook his head solemnly. "Vell, zis could be serious," he began. "Or it could not be. Zis is up to you!"

I scratched my head. "Well, is the cure going to take long?" I asked.

The doctor jotted down some notes on a pad. "Vell, it could be long," he said. "Or it could not be long. Zis is up to you!"

Now I was confused. If everything was up to me, what was I paying the most famous psychoanalyst in New Mouse City to do? "Will this treatment be expensive?" I asked.



The doctor stood up. "Vell, it could be expensive," he said. "Or it could not be. Zis is up to you!"

This rodent was beginning to sound like a broken record. Just then, he put his paw on my shoulder. "Remember, zis is all up to you!" he repeated. "You must **FACE YOUR FEARS**. Otherwise you vill never get vell. I vill see you next Wednesday. For now, it vill be vone hundred dollars. Thank you."

I left Dr. Shrinkfur's office feeling much lighter. That's because my wallet was completely empty!

*I left Dr. Shrinkfur's office
feeling much lighter.*



Well, if the most famous
PSYCHOANALYST
in **NEW MOUSE CITY**
said it was up to me to get
well, then I guess it was!



WHAT'S UP, GERONIMO?

For the next few days, I couldn't leave the house. What if it rained? What if a giant cat with two heads attacked me?

Yes, I had to face the fact that I was getting worse. I was **AFRAID** of everything.

Then one morning **the phone rang**.

"Hello, Stilton speaking, *Geronimo Stilton*," I murmured.

It was my sister, Thea. She is a special correspondent for the newspaper I run, *The Rodent's Gazette*. It is Mouse Island's most popular paper!

"Geronimo!!! **Where have you been?**" squeaked my



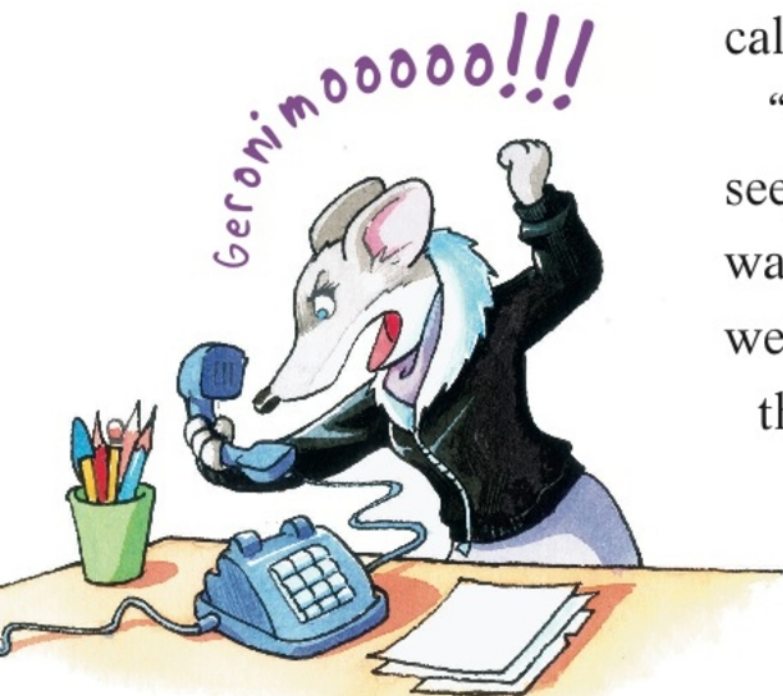


sister. "It's been days since you were in the office!" I could tell she was annoyed. "Did you forget about the two television interviews? And what about the conference at the *Press Club*? Have you lost your calendar? Or maybe you're just turning into a cheesebrain!" I could hear her thumping her paw angrily on the desk. Uh-oh. When my sister gets mad, she's like my uncle Cheesebelly when the deli runs out of mozzarella balls. There's no

calming her down.

"Um, well, you see," I mumbled, "I wasn't feeling too well. But I'll be there tomorrow.

Yes, tomorrow, for sure. . . ."





ALL IN THIRTY SECONDS FLAT!

The next day, I made a decision. It was time to get off my tail. I couldn't stay inside forever. I took a deep breath and forced myself to leave the house.

I took the stairs. No, I wasn't ready for the elevator yet. (I was too **AFRAID** of closed spaces.) Then I opened the front door and stuck my snout outside. It was so noisy! I could barely hear myself think. Car horns blared. Delivery trucks rumbled down the street. Had it always been this loud? Carefully, I set a paw on the pavement. Nothing happened. I was so relieved.

I DID IT! I REALLY DID IT!

Why was I so afraid to go out? It's no big



deal. At last, things were starting to look up. I walked to the newsstand to buy a paper.



1. I had hardly opened it when . . .

2. A flowerpot fell from a window ledge, hitting me on the head.



3. Stumbling, I crashed right into a lamppost.

4. Then I tripped on a mouse hole cover.

5. I fell and bashed my snout on the hard pavement.

2.

3.

4.

5.





6. As I was getting up, a taxi ran over my tail.

7. Then a pigeon decided to poop on my nose.

And it all happened in thirty seconds flat!
“Heeeeeeeelp!” I shrieked in a panic. I immediately scampered back home.

“See, I was right all along!” I squeaked out loud. “Going out is **DANGEROUS BUSINESS!** From now on, I’m staying put!” I locked the door. It took a little while. I had added five extra dead bolts. You can never be too safe.





NO SHOTS, PLEASE!

Thea called again the next day. She was at the office, even though it was a Sunday. “Geronimo! How are you?” she asked.

“Well, um, I’ve got a cold,” I murmured. I pretended to **SNEEZE**.

There was silence on the other end. Could my sister tell I was faking? “Well, don’t worry,” she finally squeaked. “We’ll just run you right over to Dr. Goodpaws. He’ll give you something to get rid of your cold. Maybe a couple of shots will do the trick!”

My eyes nearly popped out of my fur.

“Nooooooooooooo!” I shrieked in terror.

“No shots, please! I’m already feeling much better. I just need to relax at home for a few more days. You know, unwind.”





My sister put me on squeakerphone.



More silence from the other end. Uh-oh. My sister wasn't buying it.

"So I heard you went to see Dr. Shrinkfur," she murmured at last. "Do you have a problem, Geronimo?"

I heard another voice in the background. "Geronimo has a problem? Maybe he should get his snout out of those books. That mouse is too brainy for his own good!"

I groaned. It was my annoying cousin Trap. He runs a thrift store called **Cheap Junk for Less**. He tells the worst jokes. And he loves to play tricks on me.

Then I heard another, smaller voice. "What's the matter with Uncle Geronimo? Can I say hello to him?" it **SQUEAKED**. I smiled. It was my favorite nephew, Benjamin.

The next thing I knew, my sister had put me on squeakerphone. "Go ahead, tell us



everything, Geronimo!” she demanded.

I chewed my whiskers. “Well, I went to see Dr. Shrinkfur because I sort of have a little problem . . .” I began.

When I was done talking, Trap was the first to pipe up.

“So what did Dr. Shrinky Dink tell you to do?” he asked.

I told him about the doctor’s advice. If I wanted to get rid of my fears, I had to face them . . . only, I was too afraid to start!

*If I wanted to get rid of
my fears, I had to face them.*





A PACKAGE FOR MR. STILTON!

Half an hour later, the doorbell rang.

I decided not to answer it. **Ring! Ring! Ring!**
But the doorbell kept ringing.

It was ten times worse than the ding of the toaster oven, which I was now afraid of. I wanted to stick my head **UNDERWATER**

to drown out the horrible noise.

Finally, I went to the door.

“A package for Mr. Stilton!” a small voice squeaked.

I didn’t move.





Then I heard a loud sniff. “Hmm . . . this smells like a box of Cheesy Chews to me,” the voice continued. “What a lucky mouse!”

Instantly, my mouth began to water.



I scratched my head. I couldn't just leave **A BOX** of Cheesy Chews on my front step. They would melt for sure. All of that delicious chocolate and cheese gone to waste. It was unthinkable. It was unimaginable. It was unmousy.

I waited for a couple of minutes. Then I carefully unlocked the door.

I stuck my snout outside. . . .



CHEESY CHEWS

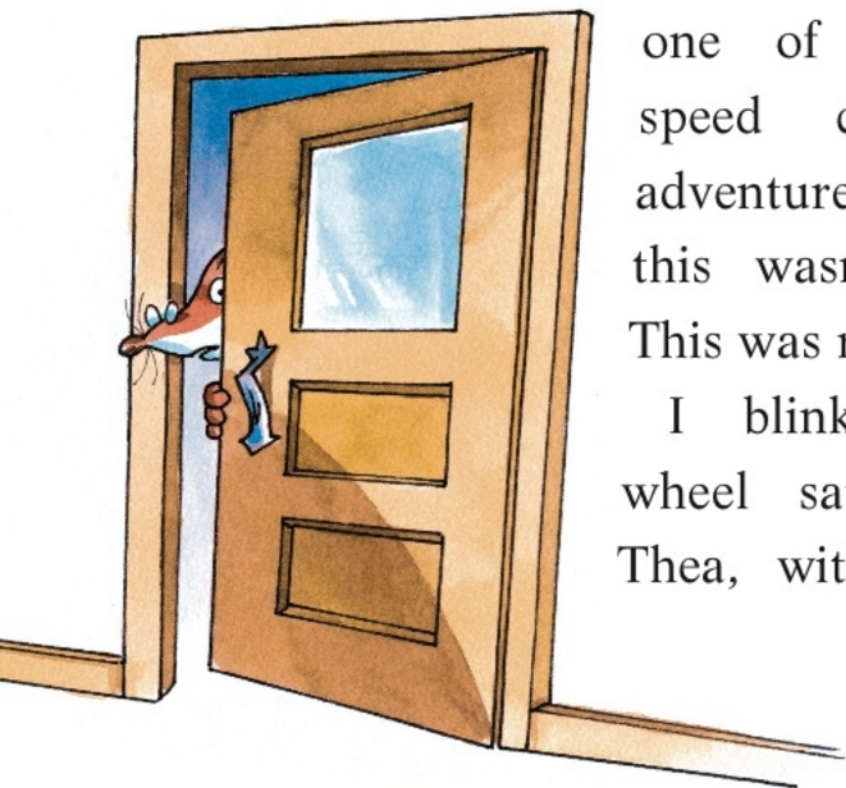
Before I could even squeak, six paws grabbed me. They lifted me up and threw me into a car.

“Heeelp!” I shrieked. “I’m being mousenapped!”

Someone started the car. We shot off with **A SQUEAL OF TIRES**. I felt like I was

in a movie. You know, one of those high-speed cat-and-mouse adventure movies. Only this wasn’t a movie. This was real!

I blinked. At the wheel sat my sister, Thea, with my cousin





Trap at her side. My young nephew Benjamin kept me company in the back.

“BUT I’M AFRAID TO GO OUT!” I shrieked in terror.

Trap squeaked, **“OH, DON’T BE SUCH A BABY!”** He shoved a Cheesy Chew into my mouth. I wanted to tell him I wasn’t a baby. I just had a problem with leaving my house. And with driving in fast cars. And with putting my paws under those paw dryers in public bathrooms. They can be so hot. A mouse could burn his or her fur right off.

But I couldn’t say a word. My mouth was full.

Oh, how I love my Cheesy Chews!

Trap was happily squeaking away. “Tell me, Cousinkins,” he babbled. “Do you like the dark chocolates with the blue-cheese filling best?”





Or the cheddar-and-caramel creams?”



Without waiting for a reply, he shoved another Cheesy Chew into my mouth.



It was so good!
My mood was beginning to lift!

Benjamin sat next to me, happily nibbling away. “Look, Uncle Geronimo!” he squeaked. “Here’s a **CARAMEL SWISS DIP**. My favorite!”

He offered a mozzarella-and-marshmallow roll to Thea.



“Try this one, Auntie,” he said. “It’s yummy!”





I must say, the **Cheesy Chews** were delicious. We polished them off in a jiffy.

I was so busy **munching**
chocolates

that I lost track of time. Suddenly, the car stopped.





We were at the airport.



MAKE WAY! MAKE WAAAAAY!

I got out. That's when it hit me. We were at the airport. I hate airports. And not just because I hate to fly. Airports are so crowded and busy. All of those rodents rushing around. It's enough to give me a mouse-sized headache!

"Why have you brought me here?"

I asked in a panic.

My cousin Trap winked at me and laughed. "Oh, we're just getting started, Gerrykins," he said mysteriously.

"What do you mean?" I asked. I was beginning to get **WORRIED**.

But before I could say another word, Trap shoved me onto a luggage cart.

MAKE WAY!



MAKE WAAAAAY!

“LET THE FUN AND GAMES BEGIIIIIN!”

he squeaked.

Then he pushed me at breakneck speed through the airport.

“Make way! Make waaaaay!” he screamed with glee. “Don’t you just love speeding?”



MAKE WAY!



MAKE WAAAAAY!

“Nooooooooo!” I wailed in horror. But my cousin was on a roll. And I’m not talking about the rolling luggage cart. Trap was running so fast his paws barely touched the ground. Suddenly, he stopped in front of the **VIR (VERY IMPORTANT RODENT)** waiting lounge.





A pretty female mouse with blonde fur was just coming out. She was wearing a very **TRENDY SAFARI OUTFIT** with a **synthetic cat-fur vest** and a pair of laced-up **LEATHER BOOTS**.

A **NECKLACE MADE OF SHARK'S TEETH** completed the look.



Shark's teeth necklace

Cat-fur vest

Leather boots



SHARK'S TEETH

Trap stopped in front of the stranger.

I smoothed my fur. The pretty mouse seemed to be staring right at me. "Oh, my!" she exclaimed. "Aren't you *Geronimo Stilton*, the famous writer?"

I blushed to the end of my whiskers.

The mouse twirled her shark's teeth necklace. Then she leaned toward me. "Could I have your autograph?" she asked. "I've read all of your books. They're so exciting! I think my favorite one is *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid*. It made me want to travel to Egypt. I also enjoyed *Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House*. It was gripping! Only a very special mouse could write so well!"



I was flattered. It was so nice to meet a fan. Especially such a pretty one.

I was about to say something clever when Trap took off again. We barreled toward the elevator with a squeal of tires.

WE BARRELED TOWARD THE ELEVATOR
WITH A SQUEAL OF TIRES





I'M AFRAID OF ELEVATORS!

Minutes later, my cousin dumped me off the luggage cart. I landed in a heap on the floor.

“Oops-a-daisy!”

Trap chuckled.



I picked myself up.

Then I straightened my glasses. My cousin hit a button on the wall next to us. That's when I realized we had made it to the elevator. “No!” I shrieked at the top of my lungs. **“I CAN'T GET ON THAT! I'M AFRAID OF ELEVATORS!”**

But Trap just twirled his tail. “Don't worry, Gerrykins,” he cried. “There's nothing to it. Just don't think about it!”



The elevator doors opened. I tried to run away, but Trap stuck out his paw. I tripped. Before I could stop myself, *I had rolled right into the elevator!*

Trap hopped in behind me. "See, nothing to it!" he said.

The doors slid shut. I gulped, then closed my eyes. I would never make it!



*I was already having problems breathing.
My tail was trembling.
My whiskers were dripping with sweat.*

It doesn't get any worse than this, I thought. But then it did.

Trap stamped on my paw. I shrieked. The pain was horrible.

At last, the doors opened. "No need to thank me," squeaked my cousin happily. "I told you, just don't think about it!"



Trap stamped on my paw.



I'M AFRAID OF FLYING!

By now, I'd had **ENOUGH**. "Take me back home!" I insisted. "I got on that elevator, but I am not getting on a plane!

I'M AFRAID OF FLYING!

As usual, my cousin seemed to ignore me. Instead, he raised his eyebrows. "Look over there!" he whispered in my ear.

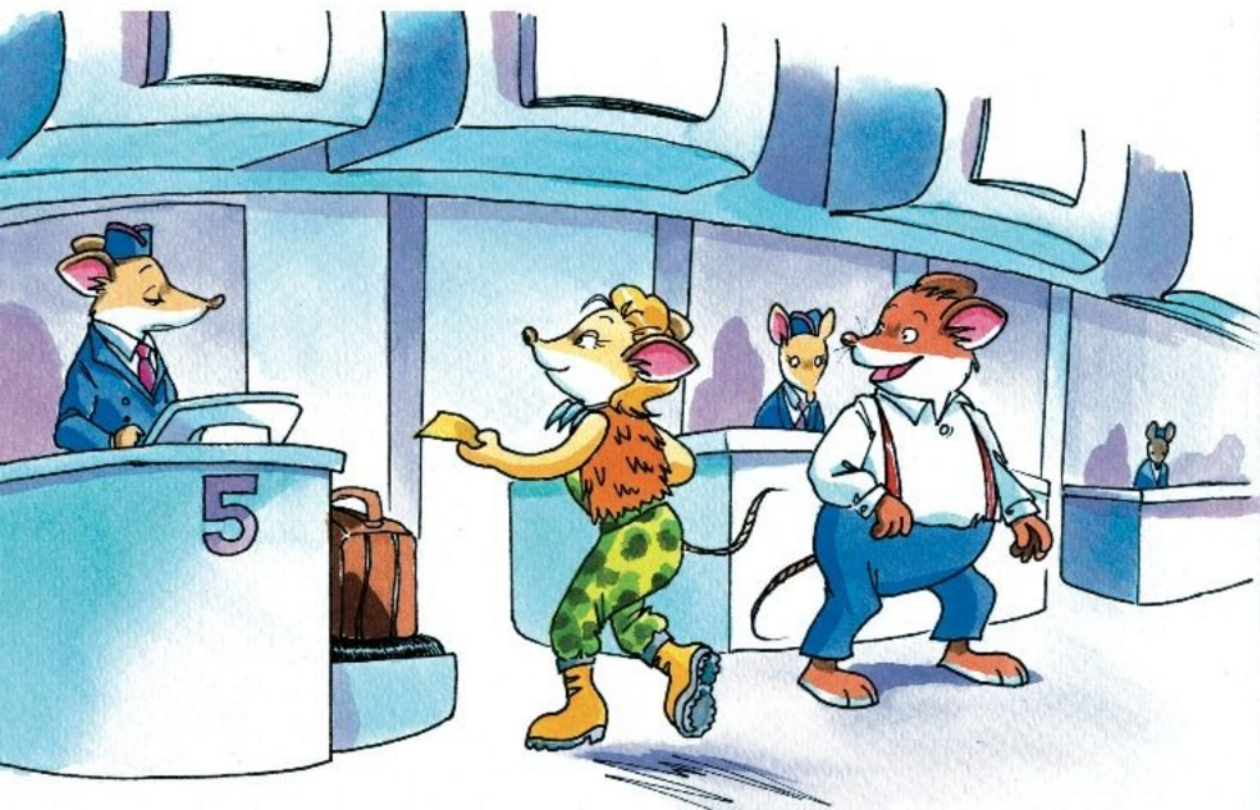
It was the pretty mouse we had met earlier. She was standing at the check-in desk. I couldn't help smiling. She really was attractive. And she was a fan of my books. What a great combination! I should have found out her name. Maybe we could be pen pals. Maybe we could share a grilled cheese sandwich at the Squeak & Chew sometime.



I stared dreamily into space. I didn't notice my cousin scamper over to the **MOUSAIR** check-in counter. He returned, waving three tickets in the air.

"Here we are!" he squeaked, waking me out of my daydream. "Thea, Benjamin, and I have seats at the back of the plane. Geronimo, you are in seat 11B."

I shook my head. "B-b-but I can't sit alone," I stammered. "I just told you, I'm afraid of flying!"





Then i heard a soft voice behind me. It was the pretty stranger. "Did you say you are sitting in 11B?" she murmured.



I nodded. "How exciting!" she exclaimed. "I am in 11A. That means we'll sit together!"

I grinned. What a sweet mouse. It would be nice to spend more time with a fan. Maybe I could get on the plane after all.

Beside me, Trap winked. For some reason, he looked very pleased with himself.

Pssst!



What was this all about? But there was no time to think.

We were about to board.

"By the way, where are we going?" I whispered to Trap as we stood in line.

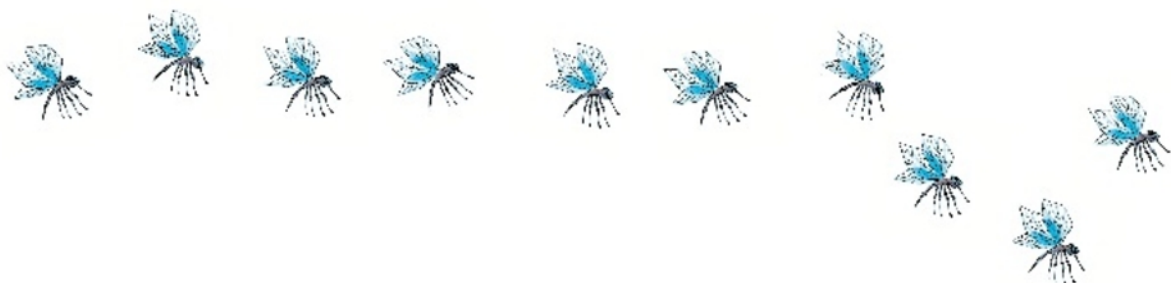


“Um, yes, well, it’s a beautiful place,” he mumbled. “Lots of fresh air and sunshine. You’re going to love it.”

For the first time since I’d been mousenapped, I began to relax. Maybe a little vacation would do me some good. I could sleep until noon. Take a dip in the pool. Watch the sun set over the ocean.

“That’s right,” Trap continued. “We’re headed for **RATTYTRAP JUNGLE** on the **RIO MOSQUITO.**”

My eyes popped open. Rattytrap Jungle? Rio Mosquito? What an odd place for a resort. Oh, well, I sighed. Maybe the mosquitoes were friendlier in the tropics.





YOU'RE A REAL GENIUS!

A few minutes later, we boarded the plane.

I quickly found my seat next to the pretty stranger. "I'm so honored to be sitting next to you," gushed my fan. "**YOU ARE A REAL GENIUS**. Your books have changed my life!"

I was so flattered I didn't even realize we had taken off.

For the next few hours, I chatted with my new friend. I was having so much fun I forgot all about my fear of flying!

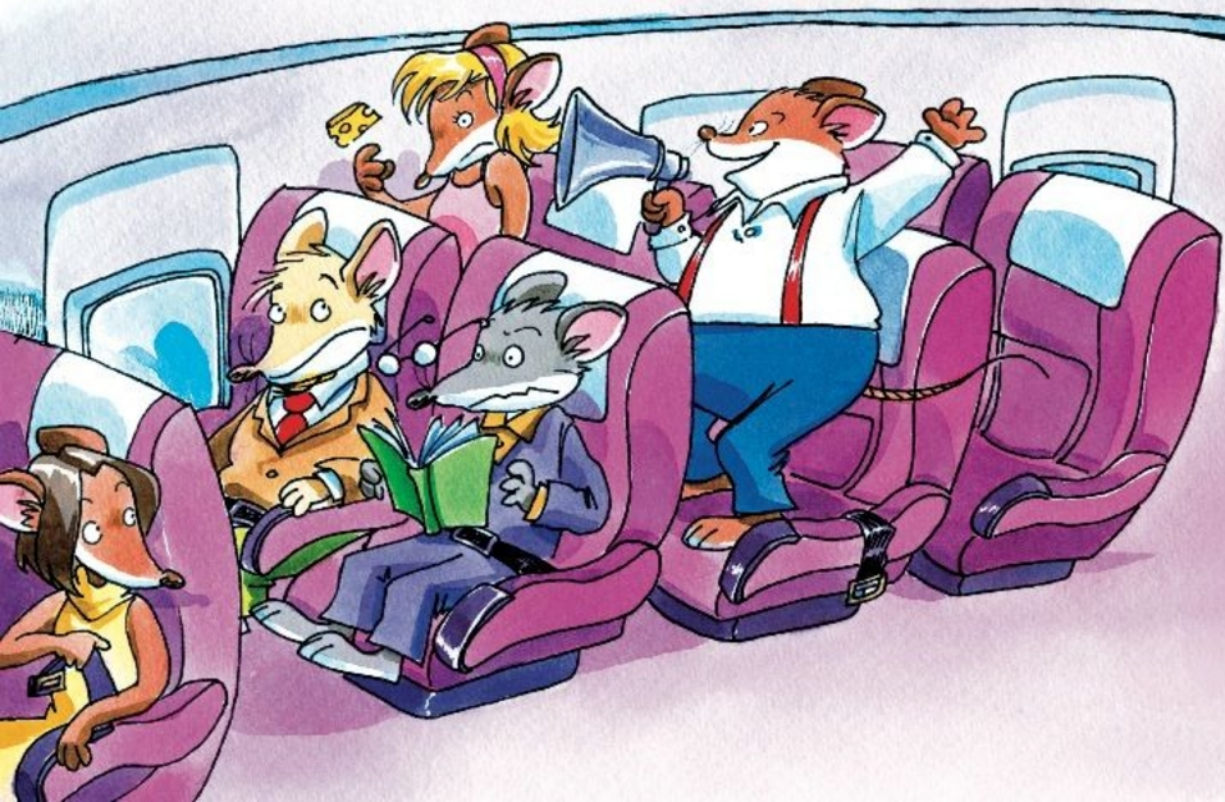
Unfortunately, my obnoxious cousin Trap took that moment to remind me. He began shouting at me through a megaphone.



“Just don’t think about it!”

he squeaked at the top of his lungs. The other passengers nearly jumped out of their seats. They shot him murderous looks. But Trap didn’t care. He was having too much fun. “Just don’t think about it!” he repeated over and over.

For once, I decided to take my cousin’s advice. I stopped thinking about flying. Instead, I thought about wringing his neck!





JUST SIGN HERE!

Soon we were landing. My pretty new friend was still chattering away. “Oh, silly me,” she laughed. “I almost forgot to introduce myself. My name is **PENELOPE POISONFUR**. But you can call me P.P. for short.” She winked.

I grinned. Maybe this would be a good time to mention my pen pal idea. After all, I didn't want to lose touch with P.P. She was one special mouse. But before I had a chance to ask, P.P. began whispering in my ear. “Do you know why I'm going to the Rio Mosquito?” she asked. Then she told me. It seemed Penelope had signed up to take some kind of special



RIO MOSQUITO



course. The course was only open to a few **CHOICE RODENTS**. Suddenly, she grabbed both of my paws. “I just had the greatest idea!” she squeaked. “Why don’t you come with me?” She pulled out a piece of paper from her bag. “All you have to do is sign this form!” she added.



I didn’t know what to say. I had never met such a bold mouse before. Bold . . . and charming.

“Well, I’m sort of traveling with my family,” I began. I glanced at the back of the plane. My cousin was busy launching spitballs into the air. I pictured the vacation. Trap would probably be playing pranks on me the whole time. I’d end up with a knot in my tail and itching powder in my bed. I turned back to my new friend. “What kind of course is it?” I asked.





P.P. threw her paw around my shoulder. **"TRUST ME,"** she murmured. **"IT'S JUST WHAT YOU NEED. YOU'LL FEEL LIKE A NEW MOUSE!"**

Now I pictured myself in a lush green tropical paradise. Maybe we would do yoga by the pool. Or some deep-breathing exercises by the soothing ocean.

"Are you sure it's going to be relaxing?" I asked.

"I guarantee it's going to be the best thing for you," P.P. insisted. She smiled flirtatiously.

JUST SIGN



HERE!

I was completely charmed.



So I signed.

In a flash, she snatched up the form. For some reason, she had the strangest look on her face. No, it wasn't a smile this time. It was more like a sneer.

“LET THE FUN AND GAMES BEGIN!”

she squeaked.

How very strange,
I thought. Where
had I heard
those same
words before?



How very strange!



IT'S SIGNED AND SEALED, STILTON!

I left the plane. I had to find Thea. I wanted to introduce her to my new friend. I knew she would be thrilled to meet one of my fans. My sister calls me a bookworm, but I know she is proud of my success.

“Thea!” I squeaked happily when I found her. “This is **PENELOPE POISONFUR**. She is a fan who has read all of my books!”

My sister ignored me and turned to Penelope. “Well, *did he sign?*” she asked.

P.P. still had that same strange sneer on her face. “*He signed it, all right!*” she laughed. “It was as easy as taking cheese niblets from a baby!”

My mouth dropped open. What was she





talking about? And why did she sound so mean?

Trap, Thea, and Benjamin were nodding their heads. "*He signed it,*" they whispered to one another.

Uh-oh. Something very odd was going on. What were they talking about? And why were they all staring at me? I didn't like it one bit.

"Who is *he*?" I asked, worried. "What did he sign?"

Instead of answering, Thea, Trap, and Benjamin turned toward Penelope. She pointed her paw at me.

"YOU have signed it, Stilton!" she shouted at the top of her lungs.

YOU HAVE SIGNED IT, STILTON!"





IT'S TOO LATE, STILTON!

I gulped. What was going on? “But, P.P.,” I protested. “I don’t understand. What did I sign?”

Penelope held up her paw in front of my face. “First of all,” she yelled, “forget the P.P. From now on, I’m Ms. Poisonfur to you!”

My mouth dropped open in shock. She’d seemed like such a sweet mouse on the plane.

“Don’t look so surprised, Stilton!” Ms. Poisonfur **barked**. “Just do as you’re told and don’t make a squeak. Now get on that jeep!” She pointed to a **YELLOW TRUCK** parked by the plane.

I blinked. This was getting ridiculous. Who was this mouse? And why was she





screaming at me? Before I could ask, she shoved a piece of paper in my face. It was the form that I had signed on the plane.

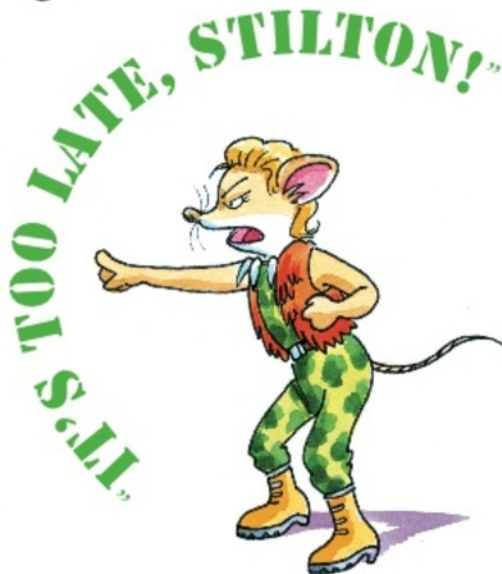
"It's too late, Stilton, you've already signed!" Penelope squeaked.

I was beginning to get a terrible feeling in my stomach. I glanced at the form. It read:

TO THE LAST WHISKER SURVIVAL SCHOOL

"I've signed up for some kind of boot camp!" I screeched. "But I'm not the boot-camp type. I'm afraid of bugs and dirt and things that go squeak in the night. Plus, I look awful in khaki. It's just not my color!"

Oh, what had I gotten myself into this time? I decided I had only one





TO THE LAST WHISKER SURVIVAL SCHOOL



Tarantula Trail 115
Rattytrap Jungle — Rio Mosquito



I, the undersigned, agree to take part in the survival course offered by To the Last Whisker. The course will last for seven days. It will take place in Rattytrap Jungle on the Rio Mosquito.

By signing this form, I agree to obey **without question** all of Ms. Penelope Poisonfur's orders.

Should I refuse to take part in the course or to obey Ms. Poisonfur, I promise to pay a fine of *one million dollars*.

Signed:

Geronimo Stilton



choice. I'd have to make a run for it. But just as I turned to leave, Penelope grabbed me by the tail.

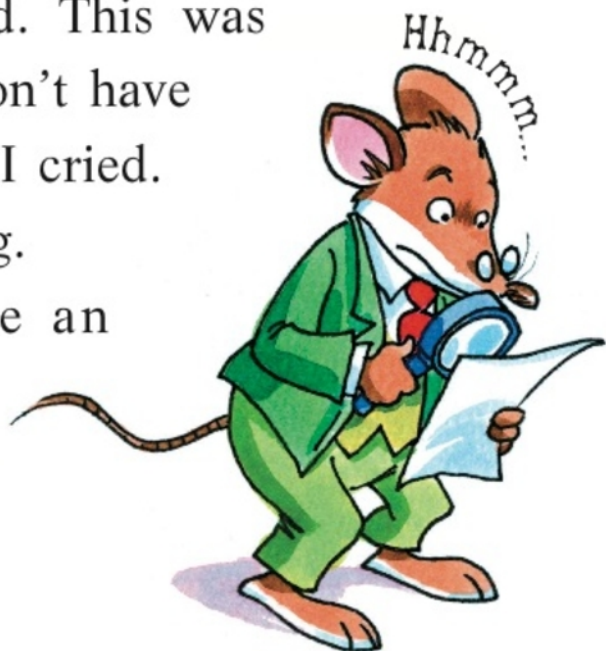


"Get in the jeep, Stilton!" she ordered. Then she handed me a magnifying glass.

"You haven't read the small print," she smirked.

I read the last line on the form out loud. "Should I refuse to take part in the course or to obey Ms. Poisonfur, I promise to pay a fine of **ONE M-M-M-M-MILLION** dollars," I stammered. This was outrageous! "But I don't have one million dollars!" I cried. My paws were shaking.

Penelope shot me an evil look. "Exactly!" she sneered. "NOW GET IN THAT JEEP!"





"I'LL FIX YOU ALL RIGHT, STILTON!"



I stumbled forward. *I must be having a bad dream*, I thought. I closed my eyes. But when I opened them, Ms. Poisonfur was glaring at me.

My family watched as I climbed into the jeep. "Benjamin," I squeaked. "How could you trick me like this?"

My favorite nephew had tears in his eyes. "Uncle, it's for your own good! I promise!"

Thea nodded her head. "That's right," she chimed in. "You'll thank us."

Trap winked at me. "The week will just fly by, you'll see!" he added.

"Don't worry!" Ms. Poisonfur squeaked. Then she punched me hard in the shoulder. I winced. This was one tough mouse. "I'll fix you!" she sneered.

"I'LL FIX YOU ALL RIGHT, STILTON!"



I'M AFRAID OF BUGS!

The jeep made its way along a paved road. Soon the road turned into a beaten track. Then it became a **MUDDY** path.

It was so hot I felt like a walking sprinkler. I was dripping sweat! Clouds of mosquitoes swarmed around me. They were having a party in my fur. I figured my tail was their dinner. They were making a meal out of it. What if they gave me some rare disease?

I'M AFRAID OF DISEASES!

We reached the camp in the middle of the night. It looked like an army barracks. It stood in the middle of a clearing surrounded by very tall trees.



I was so tired. I fell onto a smelly bunk bed. I tried not to think about the fleas that were probably crawling in it. Ugh!

I'M AFRAID OF BUGS!



Exhausted, I fell asleep fully dressed. That night, I kept hearing Trap's voice in my dreams. "Just don't think about it!" he chanted over and over.





DAY 1: MONDAY

At dawn, Penelope gave me a wake-up call. She poured a bucketful of icy water on my head! “**LINE UP!**” she shrieked.

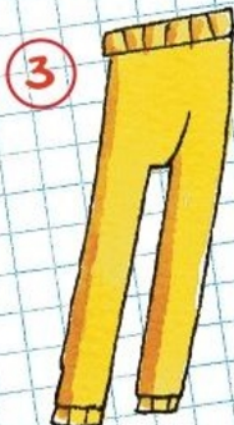
I looked outside. That’s when I discovered there were four other mice taking this crazy jungle course.

I was about to slip into the green jumpsuit I’d found in my closet. But, even though I was in the hot jungle, I’d put on a clean undershirt first. I love my undershirts. I wear one all the time, even in the summer. That’s because **I’M AFRAID OF DRAFTS.**

Unfortunately, Penelope was watching me. Before I could put one paw through my undershirt, she snatched it away and squeaked at the top of her lungs,

A GAME FOR REAL MICE

FIND THE ARTICLE OF CLOTHING
A **REAL** MOUSE WOULD NOT WEAR.



ANSWER:

THE ARTICLE OF CLOTHING A REAL MOUSE WOULD NOT WEAR IS THE UNDERSHIRT (2).

**“REAL MICE DON'T WEAR
UNDERSHIRTS, STILTON!”**



I cringed, then put on the jumpsuit. Penelope threw an enormous backpack at me. It weighed a ton. I'd be lucky if I could take one pawstep.

Meanwhile, Penelope lifted her own backpack without batting an eyelash. Then I followed her outside.

“FORWARD MARCH!” she yelled.

We left **camp** and began our long trek.

I introduced myself to the other mice.





“Good morning, everyone,” I said. “My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*.”

A big, tough, muscled mouse nodded at me. He wore his fur in a crew cut. “I’m Burt Burlyrat. But you can call me B.B.,” he announced. “I’m a forest ranger.”

Next to B.B. stood a short, round rodent. He clasped my paw. “How do you do, my name is Tubby Tumblemouse,” he said. Then he whispered, “My friends call me Furball.” I smiled. Tubby seemed like a nice mouse. I wondered why he had signed up for this course.



**BURT BURLYRAT,
AKA B.B.**



Tubby told me he was a **cheese salesmouse**. He had put on a few extra pounds eating too many samples. “I thought this was an easy weight-loss course. Ms. Poisonfur told me it would be like a mini vacation,” he explained. Sweat dripped down his fur. “She didn’t tell me we’d be forced to run twenty miles a day!”



**TUBBY
TUMBLEMOURSE,
AKA FURBALL**

“W-w-what?” I stammered, sinking under the heavy backpack. “Twenty miles a day? I’m **never** going to make it! I’ve got low blood pressure! I’ve got low iron! I’ve got low self-esteem!” This was going to be worse than I’d thought. “Oh, how did I get myself into this mess?!”



I sobbed, burying my snout in my paws.

Tubby put his paw around my shoulder. “Don’t panic, Geronimo,” he whispered. “I’ve brought an emergency supply of **cheese sandwiches**.

They’re hidden in my backpack.”

Just then, a teenaged mouse with pigtails scampered over. “Hi, there!” she chirped. “I’m Suzie Squeakers.”



**Suzie
Squeakers**

Next came an elderly female rodent. She was *small and skinny*, with wiry fur. She wore a pair of thick glasses and a *purple baseball cap*. She introduced herself as Sandy Silverfur. Sandy was old, but you wouldn’t find her in any old mouse home. Not yet, anyway. Sandy **LOVED TO**



*Sandy
Silverfur*

LIVE DANGEROUSLY. In fact, you could say she was a bit of a daredevil. She once went scuba diving off the shores of Tomcat Island!

Unlike Sandy and B.B., hiking through the jungle was not my idea of a good time. Within minutes, my paws were covered with blisters.

Suddenly, a **terrible screeching** filled the air. It was Penelope, singing.

"I AM A WILD RODENT,
I HAVE A WILD HEART!
NOTHING EVER SCARES ME,
BECAUSE I'M TOUGH AND SMART!
THIS COURSE IS REALLY SUPER,
YOU LEARN TO BE A TROOPER!
YOU LEARN TO MARCH AND SWEAT AND SING
YOU LEARN TO DO MOST ANYTHING!"



I grumbled. That was the most ridiculous song I had ever heard.

Who likes to march?

But soon the rest of the group was singing along.

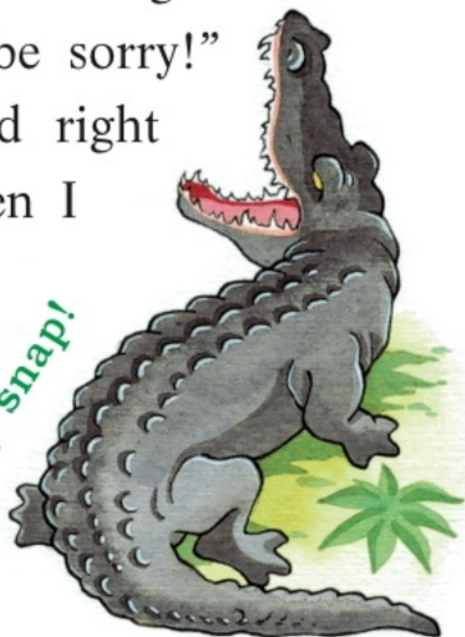
Well, you wouldn't catch me joining in. I wasn't into singing. I was having enough trouble just breathing!

Then, someone waved the contract under my snout. It was Penelope.

"You signed it, Stilton. Now sing!" she demanded. "Sing or you'll be sorry!" Her beady little eyes drilled right through me. I shivered. Then I sang at the top of my lungs.

I was so busy singing I hardly noticed we had entered the forest. Trees as tall as

Snap snap snap!





skyscrapers surrounded us. The foliage was **so thick** we couldn't see any sunlight. The trees were home to all kinds of animals. They called to one another as we



passed by. Monkeys, parrots, cheetahs, and snakes watched our every move. We were like rodent celebrities at an awards show. Only no one was snapping our picture.





Instead, they were snapping their teeth! This tropical jungle was a very scary place. One wrong pawstep and we'd all be history!

WE MARCHED

AND MARCHED
AND MARCHED
AND MARCHED.

And then? WE MARCHED some more.

We didn't even stop for a meal. Instead, Penelope handed out sandwiches as we hiked. Unfortunately, they were not cheese sandwiches. They were made of mashed fleas. I had never seen anything so gross in my life. Some of the fleas were still kicking their tiny legs. I was so disgusted. But I was so hungry. I ate every bite.

We were allowed to stop only to go to the bathroom. Penelope timed us. Fifteen seconds for each mouse. For any other emergency, we had to hand in a written request.

I quickly jotted down a note. "Dear Ms.

All kinds of animals...

...watched our every move.

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!

A very scary place...

...we'd all be history!

Snap!

Snap!

Snap!





Poisonfur,” it read. “Would it be possible to take a short break?”

Penelope read the note out loud, then laughed. “You city rodents are spineless,” she smirked. “You’re as soft as a bowl of cheese with extra cream, Stilton!” She twirled her tail, deep in thought. “This may be harder than I thought,” she murmured. “But don’t worry. I’ll fix you. When you’re done with this course, you’ll be stronger than a maximum-strength glue trap. And best of all, you’ll be smarter than the sharpest street mouse in all of New Mouse City!”

We marched for the rest of the day. When it turned dark, the jungle became even more **TERRIFYING**. Spooky shadows were everywhere. Strange eyes glowed in the

strange eyes glowed in the trees



trees. Night birds sang to one another. And I'm not talking happy jingles. These songs sounded more like creepy Halloween music. Worst of all, it was dark. Very dark.

Did I mention . . .

I'M AFRAID OF THE DARK?

But I was forced to forget about it. I had to put one paw in front of the other. I had no choice. Finally, at midnight, we stopped. We were so tired.

We sat down **AROUND A FIRE**.

"Come and get it!" shouted Penelope, banging on a pot with a spoon.

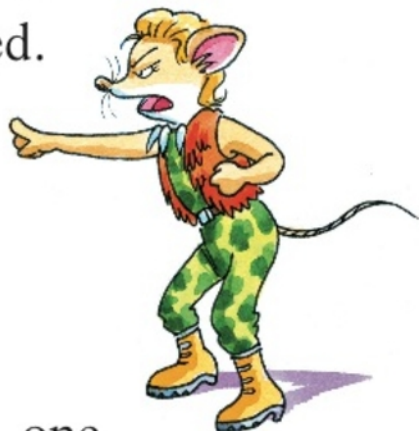
I was starving. I grabbed my bowl and began to slurp up the reddish liquid. Seconds later, I started to gag. "Bleah!!!! What's this?" I cried.





Penelope sneered. “That’s red-
ant soup, Stilton!” she squeaked.

**“EAT IT OR
YOU’LL BE
SORRY!”**



The rest of us looked at one
another. We looked at the soup. Then we
looked at Penelope. She glared at us, her
paws planted firmly on her hips. The soup
looked scary. But Penelope looked like a
rabid cat about to go on a hunting spree.

Like robots, we picked up our spoons and
ate. I was so tired I could hardly chew.

Later, I **FELL ASLEEP** with my snout
in my bowl. Oh, well. At least no one was
bothered by my snoring.



I fell asleep with my snout in my bowl.



DAY 2: TUESDAY

The next morning, Penelope woke me up with another bucketful of icy water. “**LINE UP!**” she yelled. Hadn’t she ever heard of an alarm clock?

After a breakfast of grilled beetles, we continued our marching. We marched nonstop until noon. I was hoping Penelope had decided to give us a break. But instead,

Splash!



she gave us a crash course in first aid.

I must admit, she taught us some pretty neat things. We even learned mouse-to-mouse resuscitation.



I guess we were all doing okay until lunch. That's when Tubby lost it. After eating his snailburger, he decided **TO DIG INTO** his secret supply of cheese sandwiches. But before he could take a single bite, Penelope caught him. She threw all of the sandwiches into the river.



Poor Tubby was beside himself. **"I WANT TO GO HOME!"** he sobbed.

But Penelope just waved the contract under his snout. "Too late, Tubster!" she shrieked. "You signed it!"

In a sudden fit, Tubby snatched the paper from her paw. Then he shoved it in his mouth and chewed it up. He looked so pleased with himself.

But Tubby's excitement didn't last long. In a flash, Penelope had pulled out another



contract from her backpack. “That was just a copy, Tubby Tails,” she chuckled. “I have the original in my office!”

Tubby’s whiskers drooped. He hung his head. His tail dragged on the ground. I had never seen a mouse look so beaten. “Here, have my snailburger!” I insisted. “I’ll skip lunch.”

Tubby thanked me with tears in his eyes. “Geronimo, you are a true friend. I will never forget you,” he cried.

After lunch, it was back to marching. At last, we reached the Rio Mosquito.



A rope hung over the water, stretched between two trees. The river roared downstream, picking up anything in its path. I saw twigs. I saw tree trunks. I saw a houseboat filled with monkeys. Everything was swept away in the raging current.

“I’m scared!” I squeaked.

I’M AFRAID OF DROWNING!

Penelope rolled her eyes. “Get moving or you’ll be sorry!” she demanded.

We did as we were told. What choice did we have? I grabbed the rope and began to cross the river. *One paw at a time*, I told myself. Slowly we made our way to the other side. I was doing it!

But suddenly, disaster struck. Someone was crying. “I’m so hungry! I’m going to faint!” Tubby wailed. Seconds later, the rope slipped from his paws. He hit the



water with a loud splash. What could I do?
I dove in after him.

Tubby's snout was already underwater. I quickly grabbed hold of his tail. Groaning, I dragged him onto the bank. Then I gave him mouse-to-mouse resuscitation. It worked!

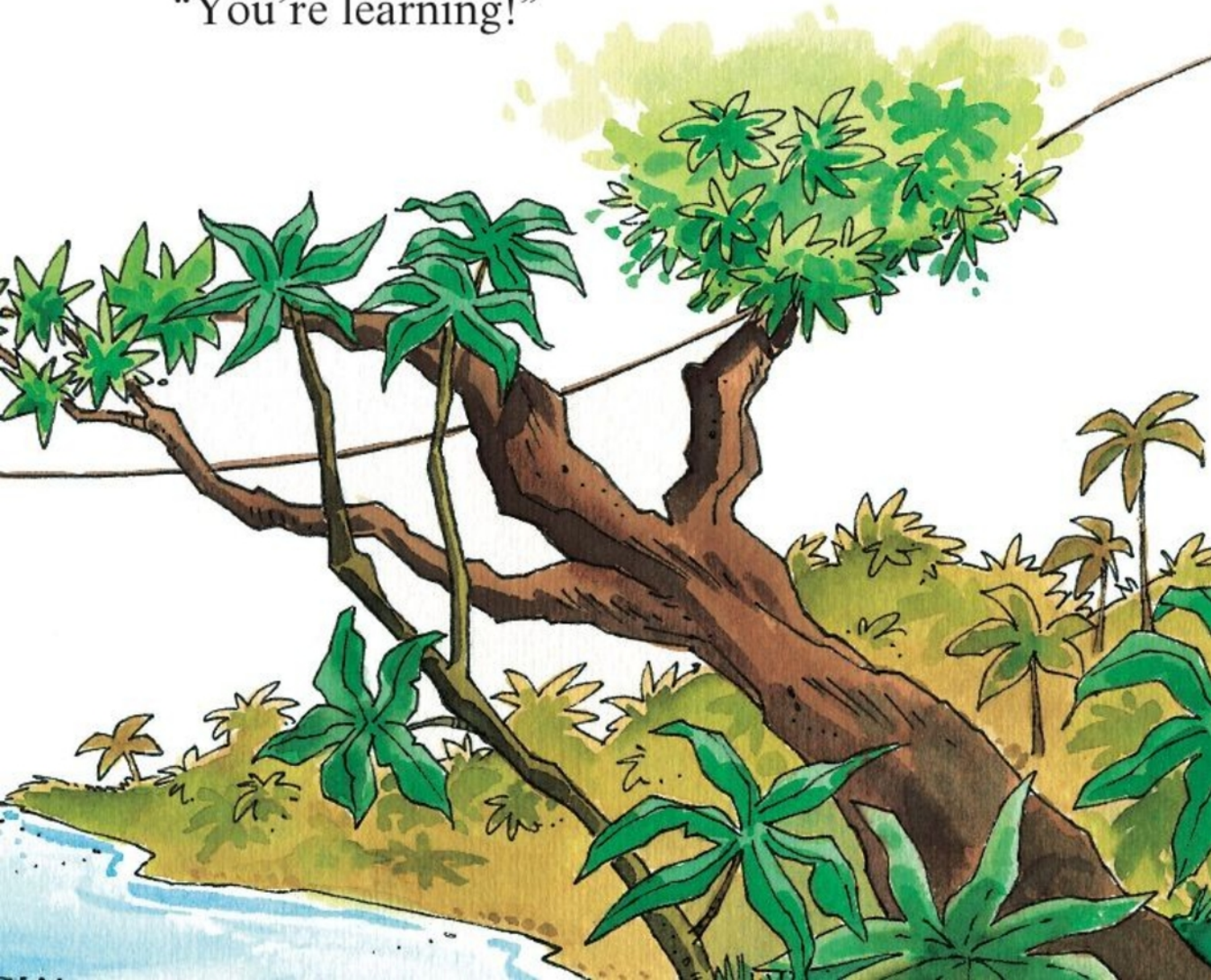
"Thank you! You saved my life!" squeaked a grateful Tubby.





I grinned. I felt like Supermouse when he does a good deed. Too bad I wasn't really Supermouse. If I were, I could have flown right home! *Still, I was proud of myself for facing another fear.*

I guess Penelope was proud of me, too. "You're learning, Stilton!" she sniggered. "You're learning!"





DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

“Today is a day of rest!” shouted Penelope the next morning. As usual, she had woken us up with a bucketful of icy water.

“Today we will build a tree house,” Penelope continued. “Stilton, you’ll be the first one to climb that tree over there!”

She pointed to a tree. It wasn’t just any old tree. It was the tallest tree I had ever seen in my life! Up, up, up it went.
I GOT DIZZY JUST LOOKING AT IT.

“I c-can’t climb that t-t-tree!” I stammered.

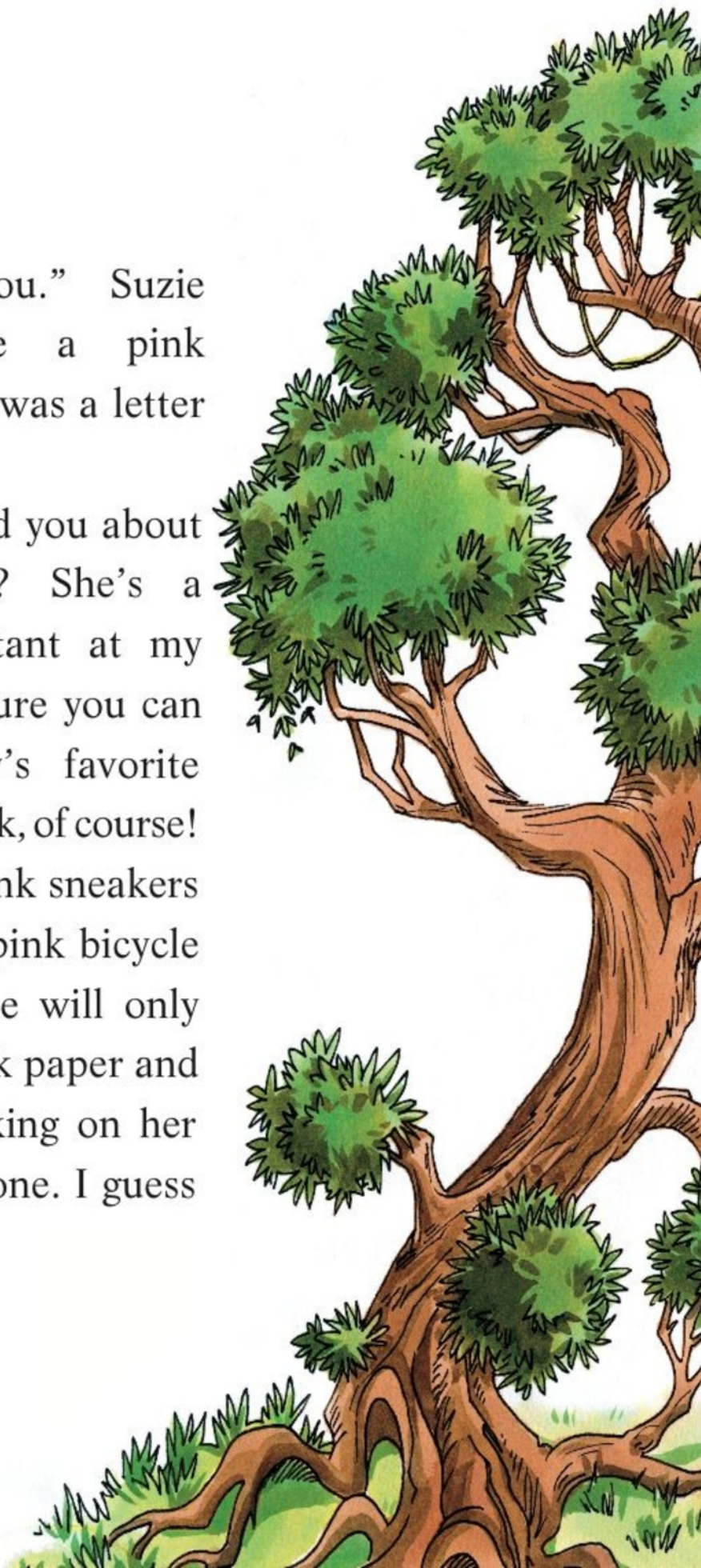
“I’M AFRAID OF HEIGHTS!”

Just then, a small paw tapped my shoulder. It was Suzie Squeakers.

“Don’t worry,” she whispered. “I’m a friend of **Pinky Pick**. She sent me along

to help you.” Suzie handed me a pink envelope. It was a letter from Pinky.

Have I told you about Pinky Pick? She’s a young assistant at my office. I’m sure you can guess Pinky’s favorite color. It’s pink, of course! Pinky has pink sneakers and rides a pink bicycle to work. She will only write on pink paper and loves squeaking on her pink cell phone. I guess



Pinky Pick



Assistant to the Boss

DEAR BOSS,

You can trust Suzie Squeakers.
She's my best friend.

Suzie is a Gerbil Scout. She got
her wilderness badge last year.

She spent one whole night in the
woods outside her mouse hole!

Good luck!

Pinky Pick

P.S. If you make it back alive, can I
have a pink computer?

The Rodent's Gazette
17 Swiss Cheese Center
New Mouse City, Mouse Island 131 31

www.geronimostilton.com



Pinky Pick

you could say Pinky is sort of hung up on the color pink. One winter, she lost her favorite pink mittens. She had to wear blue ones instead. Poor Pinky cried for weeks!

Now I bent over Pinky's letter.

Suzie winked at me. When Penelope wasn't looking, she began to follow me up the tree. Immediately, I felt faint. "Don't look down!" Suzie advised. It was good advice. If I didn't look down, I couldn't tell how high up we had climbed.

I breathed a sigh of relief. This was no big deal. We were only a few feet off the ground. I probably could have jumped down if I'd





joy. Luckily, I remembered where I was just in time. I was happy, but I wasn't a cheesehead. I wasn't about to let go of that tree!

At last, we came to a very long branch with thick leaves. "This is the perfect spot to build our shelter," announced Suzie. Together we built a ladder out of some tree limbs. Before long, our tree house was looking great. **I was so proud of myself and my new friends.** And best of all, I realized being up so high wasn't that scary after all.

"Not bad for a bunch of city mice," Penelope admitted when we were finished. "Not bad at all . . ."

That night I dreamed that Pinky Pick was winking at me. "What do you say, BOSS?" she squeaked. "Can I have that pink computer now? Can I, Boss?"



DAY 4: THURSDAY

The next morning, I woke up to a pair of singing birds. The sun warmed my fur. I stretched. For the first time since I'd arrived in the jungle, I felt great. But what was different about today? I just couldn't put my paw on it. Then it hit me—a **bucketful of icy water** right in my snout!

Penelope Poisonfur snickered, then she barked out orders. "LINE UP! she squeaked. "Today you will learn to use a compass. Each of you must find your way to our next **CAMP SITE** before nightfall. And you must do it on your own!"

I shuddered.

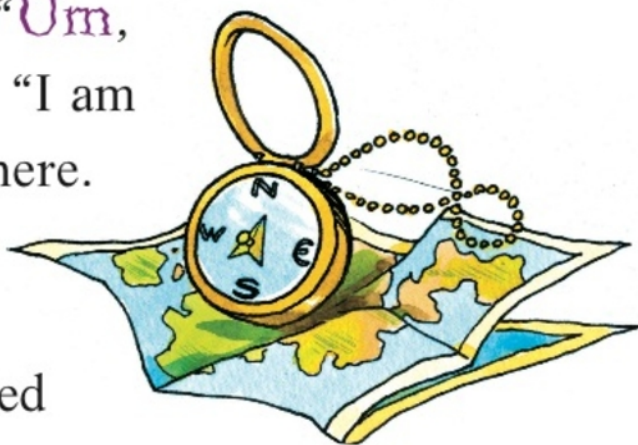
"BUT I'M AFRAID TO BE LEFT ON MY OWN IN THE FOREST!"

I cried. Too late. Everyone had already left.



I was alone in the forest. This was worse than the time I got separated from my uncle Nibbles at the Marvelous Mouse Tail Circus. At least that time, the rat clowns kept me laughing. Now there wasn't a rodent in sight. Monkeys **SHRIEKED** at me from the trees. Snakes **HISSED** from behind rocks. Even the singing birds sounded **SCARY**. I jumped at every noise. I was like a furry rubber band ready to snap.

I decided I'd better study the map. *This will be as easy as cheese pie*, I told myself. All I had to do was figure out how to get to the camp. "Um, let's see," I mumbled. "I am here, or *maybe* I'm here. And then I'm headed there — or maybe there?" I checked





the compass. North, South, East, West. It wasn't as easy as I'd thought. I tried giving myself a pep talk. "You can figure it out, Stilton," I insisted. "Just use your brain!" But my brain must have been taking a cheese break. Half an hour later, I burst into tears. "Rotten rat's teeth!" I squeaked.

"I'm lost!"

I roamed the jungle for hours. Every now and then, I would stop to have a good cry. Oh, how could my family do this to me? They said they wanted to help me, but maybe they just wanted to get rid of me! Yes, that had to be it! If I were gone, my sister would probably sell *The Rodent's Gazette*. She'd buy a beauty salon and get her fur done every day for free. My cousin would move into my large, comfy mouse hole. He was such a slob. He'd make a mess of my

SUDDENLY, I HEARD A RUSTLING SOUND IN THE LEAVES.





pretty cat-fur rug. Just thinking about it made me angry. "I'm going to make it back if it kills me!" I cried, stamping my paw.

Suddenly, I heard a rustling sound in the leaves. I gulped. Maybe I shouldn't have used the word *kill*. I didn't want to give some wild animal any ideas!

Grabbing a big stick for protection, I hid behind a tree.

Just then, I saw a bush move.

"Take that, you wild animal!" I shrieked, striking with all my might.

"Oooouch!" a voice cried out. A





rodent crawled out from behind the bush. No, it wasn't a wild animal at all. It was Burt Burlyrat.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, B.B.!" I apologized. "I thought you were about to attack me!"

Burt rubbed his head. He looked annoyed.





By now, he had sprouted a huge bump on his forehead. I felt bad about the bump. But I didn't feel bad about running into B.B. With his help, I could definitely get to the **NEW CAMP**. After all, B.B. had said he was a forest ranger. A forest ranger should be able





to read a map and a compass, right?

“Let’s get going!” he ordered, sounding like an army general. I hopped to my paws. B.B. checked the compass. “This way!” he shouted, **storming off**. “The compass is never wrong!”

I scurried behind him. B.B. wasn’t exactly the friendliest mouse around. I mean, I wouldn’t invite him over for one of my aunt Honeywhisker’s yummy cheddar casseroles. But I didn’t care. I just wanted to get out of this creepy jungle.

After a while, I started to **WORRY** again. We had been hiking for five hours, but we didn’t seem to be getting anywhere. “Um, B.B., shouldn’t we be there by now?” I asked, wiping sweat from my fur.

He shot me a look. “I told you, Stilton, this is the right direction!” he shrieked.



“The compass is never wrong!”

After **TWO MORE HOURS**, my paws were killing me. B.B. kept insisting we were going the right way, but I had a terrible feeling. Something wasn't right. Finally, the sun began to set. I started to panic. “Um, are you sure you know where we're going?” I asked B.B. for the millionth time.

Instead of scowling at me, B.B. began to tremble. Then he did the most un-B.B.-like thing. He began to cry! He cried so hard I





thought we would have to swim out of there. "I'm lost!" he choked. "I'm totally and completely lost!"

I tried to cheer him up. "Don't worry," I said. "We are lost together. We'll find our way out of here. I promise."

I stared at the trees surrounding us. All of a sudden, I had an idea. "Let's climb a tree!" I said. "From way up high, we may be able to see our **CAMP!**"

B.B. brightened. Then he turned sad again. "I can't climb a tree," he groaned. "My head is still spinning from the bump. You are the only one who can save us, Geronimo!"

I was worried. But I couldn't let B.B. down. "No problemo," I said, trying to sound brave.

I began to climb. My paws felt like cream

I began to climb.



cheese, but I remembered Suzie Squeaker's advice. I never looked down.

I climbed higher and higher.

After a while, I stopped. I stared out over the treetops.

There! In the dark, I could see the lights from the **CAMP**. I was so happy. I felt like I had just been named author of the year.

"I can see the camp. It's over there!" I called to B.B.



Slowly, I climbed down again. As soon as I reached the ground, B.B. hugged me. It turns out he wasn't a real forest ranger after all. He was just a pretend forest ranger at Mouseyworld, the popular rodents' amusement park. That explained why he couldn't figure out the compass.

Fifteen minutes later, we reached the **CAMP.**



DAY 5: FRIDAY

Penelope **woke us up at dawn** with the usual shower of icy water. I was beginning to wonder where she was getting it. I hadn't had a nice, icy beverage since we left New Mouse City!

After a breakfast of scrambled worms, she gave us a lesson on survival techniques. **"RATTYTRAP JUNGLE IS FULL OF DANGERS!"** she squeaked. "You must be careful where you step, as you are about to see."

She stuck a red flag in the ground. **"SIT HERE, STILTON!"** she ordered.

I was about to sit down when Penelope began to shout, **"DON'T MOVE, STILTON!"** She kicked away a leaf on the ground.



Underneath lay a huge scorpion!



Underneath lay a huge scorpion!

“Be careful where you step,” our teacher repeated. “If you had sat down, you’d be **A DEAD MOUSE, STILTON!**”

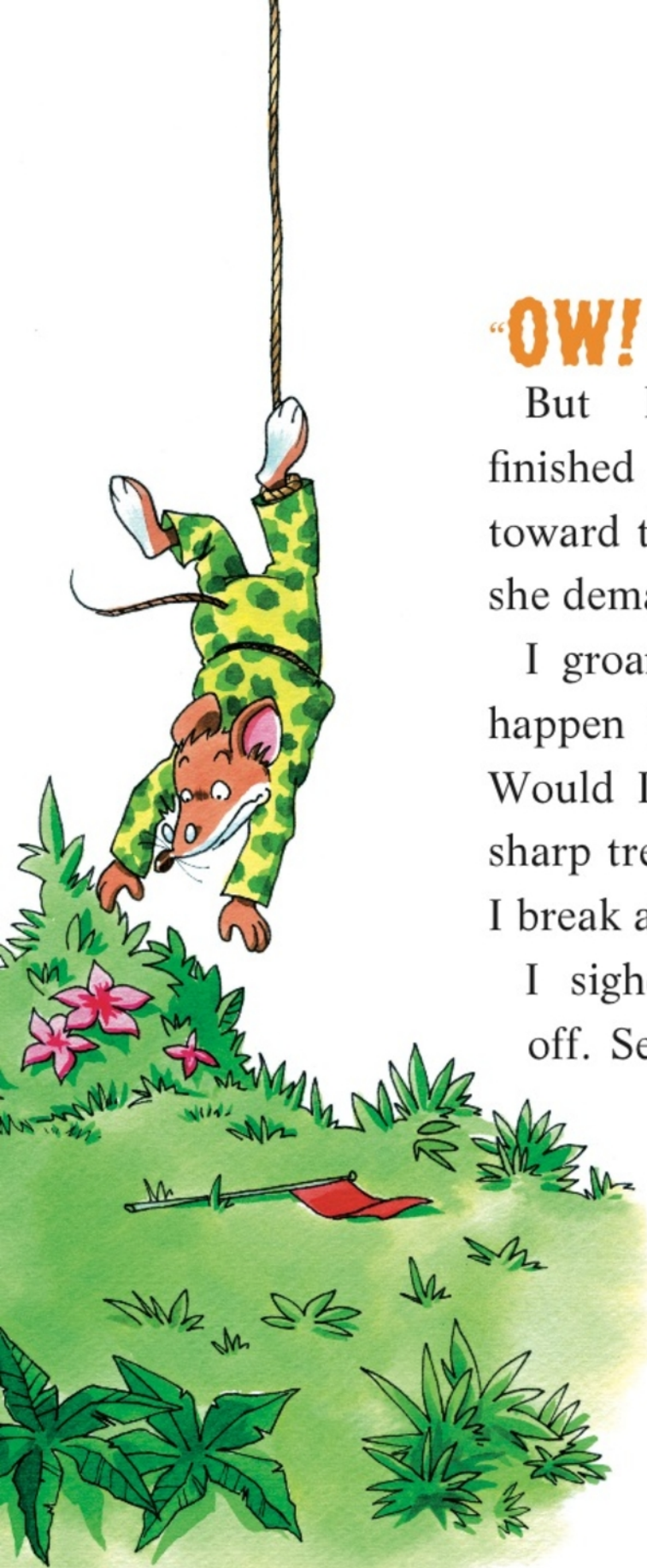
I shivered. My life flashed before my eyes.

Then, suddenly, someone was poking me. “No time for daydreaming!” Penelope shouted. She pointed to the path ahead. “Danger is everywhere,” she said again. “Now walk to the end of the path, Stilton!”

I set out. I had hardly taken more than a couple of steps when I was suddenly lifted into the air! A rope was hidden in the bushes. **It was a trap!**

“Cheese niblets!” I cried. I was dangling upside down!

Our teacher chuckled. “See what I mean, Stilton?” she said, cutting the rope that was holding me up. I fell right on my snout!



“OW!” I screamed.

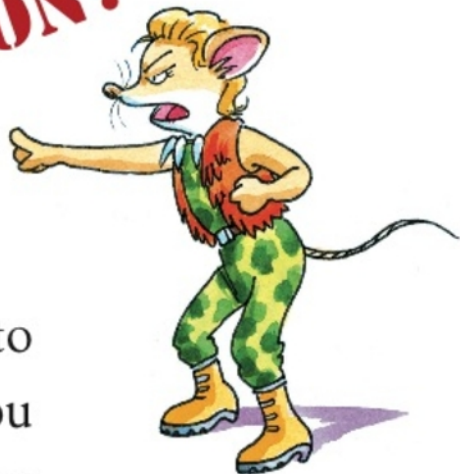
But Penelope wasn't finished with me. “Run toward that tree, Stilton!” she demanded.

I groaned. What would happen to me this time? Would I be blinded by a sharp tree branch? Would I break all of my paws?

I sighed. Then I took off. Seconds later, I fell into a deep, dark hole. **“HELP!”**

I shrieked. Our teacher peeped into the hole.

**“ARE YOU STILL ALIVE,
STILTON?”**



she smirked. “Good. Deal with it!” Then she turned to the others. “I hope that you will all remember what has happened to our friend here today!” she squeaked. “Now let’s go!”

My mouth dropped open. I began to shake. This was the lowest of the low. How could she leave me alone in this dark, scary place? It was so horrifying. Can you guess why? That’s right, **I’M AFRAID OF ENCLOSED SPACES!**

I waited three hours. Finally, Penelope came back and pulled me out. I was still shaking, but I was proud of myself. I had done it! Yes, I, *Geronimo Stilton*, had faced another fear!



Our teacher peeped into the hole.



DAY 6: SATURDAY

The next morning, I got up extra early. I hid behind my cabin door. I was going to trick our evil teacher at her own game. When she arrived with her bucket of icy water, I stuck out my paw. She tripped. Water flew everywhere. But not a drop landed on me. *Oops* “*Oops*,” I said when Penelope caught me.

She handed me a mop. “**CLEAN UP THIS MESS!**” she ordered, but she was half smiling. “Not bad, Stilton,” she admitted. “Not bad for a scaredy mouse.”

After a breakfast of fried fleas, we lined up. Penelope said she needed a volunteer. Someone who was afraid of spiders.

I quickly hid behind B.B. I’m sure you

already know why. **I AM AFRAID OF SPIDERS!**

“I’m going to choose a name,” our teacher announced. She stared up at the clouds. She pretended to be deep in thought. But she didn’t fool me. I knew what was coming. Seconds later, she cried, “Stilton!”

Oh, *why* did she *always* have to pick on me?! I sighed and came forward.

Penelope picked up a small cage. It was **full of hairy spiders**. Stale Swiss rolls! Just seeing all of those spindly legs gave me **MOUSE BUMPS!**

“Just remember to stay calm,” she advised. “Now close your eyes, Stilton!” She placed something on my snout.



“Keep very still, Stilton,” our teacher whispered. “And whatever you do, don’t open your eyes!”

I tried. But I was curious. I just had to see what was on my snout. Slowly, I peeked open one eye. ***AN ENORMOUS HAIRY SPIDER STARED BACK AT ME!***

I was too horrified to squeak.





“Keep still for ten seconds,” Penelope ordered. Then she began to count. The rest of the group joined in. “Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five . . .”

MY WHISKERS TREMBLED WITH FEAR.

“You can do it!” Tubby shouted.

“You’re almost there!” B.B. cheered.

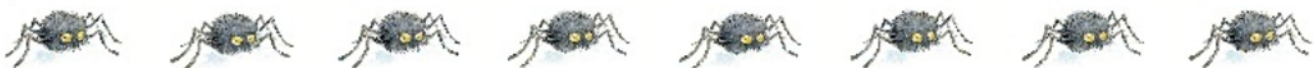
“Hurray for Stilton!” everyone shouted when the countdown was over.

I pointed to the spider with a trembling paw. “Take it off, please,” I squeaked.

Our teacher sneered. She took the spider and waved it under my nose. How strange. The spider’s legs didn’t seem to be moving at all. In fact, it looked quite stiff. I peered at it closely.

“It’s plastic, Stilton!” Penelope smirked.

I fainted. But moments later, she woke me up with a bucketful of icy water! So





much for starting my day off on the right paw.

Next, Penelope pulled a **huge green snake** from a sack. She twisted it up into a ball like a pro.

"I'm going to teach you how to tell the difference between a poisonous snake and one that is harmless," she said. "The one I'm holding now is harmless. Catch it, Silverfur!" she shouted, throwing it to Sandy.

The old mouse went pale, but she still managed to catch that snake in midair.

The reptile twisted itself around her neck. Without batting an eyelash, Sandy shouted, **"Yip-pee!"**

Everyone applauded.



Penelope grabbed another snake from the sack. She whirled it in the air. “Always hold a snake by its tail,” she explained. “This way it can’t bite.”

I watched carefully. It looked so easy. Without thinking, I picked up a snake that looked just like the others. I began whirling it over my head.

“Look at me!” I shouted with pride.

For some odd reason, Penelope didn’t look happy. Maybe she liked to be the only one showing off. Oh, well, I decided, old Poisonfur would just have to get used to it. The new *Geronimo Stilton* was brave. He was tough. And he wasn’t afraid to show it! Then I noticed Penelope had dropped her snake. She waved her paws in the air. What was she doing? Some kind of jungle dance?

“That’s the wrong snake, Stilton!”





I began whirling the snake over my head.



Penelope squeaked. "It's poisonous!"

Moldy mozzarella sticks! I was terrified.

"Don't panic, Stilton," our teacher continued. "Just keep whirling it!"

My knees wobbled. My fur stood on end. Still, I managed to keep whirling the snake.

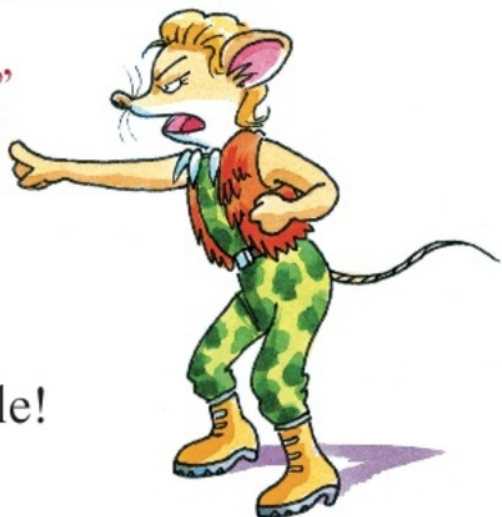
Penelope began playing a tune on her flute.

The snake closed its eyes. Soon it fell asleep.

I wished I was sleeping, too. Old Poisonfur had started yelling at me. Then she picked me up and began whirling *me* over her head!

**"NOW YOU'LL LEARN,
STILTON!"**

Oh, what a day in the jungle!





DAY 7: SUNDAY

Saturday night, we marched nonstop. On Sunday morning, we reached our **FIRST CAMP**. We had only been gone for one week. Still, it felt like a lifetime. **I had learned so much!** Yes, I had to admit, the course in the jungle had changed my life.



After our final bug breakfast, we said our good-byes. *I was sad to see my new friends go.* We had been through so much together.

Tubby hugged me. "Thank you, Geronimo," he said.



"If it weren't for you, I'd be at the bottom of a river!"





Suzie Squeakers winked at me. "It was great to meet you, Boss! Pinky would be proud of you!" she grinned.

Burt Burlyrat crushed my paw in his strong grip. And Sandy Silverfur gave me a photo of me whirling the snake.



"So you won't **forget this course,**" she chuckled.



I grinned. I knew I would never forget my adventures in the jungle. Or the friends I had made.



I invited them all to New Mouse City.

Finally, it was Penelope's turn. "I've fixed

you, haven't I, Stilton?" she smirked.

I shook her paw. I wasn't about to argue. Penelope had cured me. I felt like a new mouse. I wasn't afraid of anything anymore. I could swim in wild rivers. I could climb trees as tall as skyscrapers. I could even eat bug sandwiches. Of course, I didn't have to like them. From now on, I'd be sticking to my favorite kind of sandwiches. The ones with cheese! Like grilled cheese on rye, ham and cheese on a hard roll, and cream cheese and jelly on whole wheat.

I turned around to leave, then shouted,



**"THANK YOU,
MS. POISONFUR!"**

Penelope waved. “You can call me P.P.,” she giggled. She really was one special mouse. Maybe someday I could take her out to dinner after all. As long as she didn’t order any bugs. *Or make me take her mountain climbing course!*

Suddenly, I was surrounded by my family. Thea, Trap, and Benjamin were a sight for sore eyes. I hadn’t realized how much I had missed them. Yes, I know my sister can be bossy at times. And my cousin loves to play pranks on me. But they’re still family.

Just then, my nephew threw his paws around my neck. “Are you still angry with me, Uncle Geronimo?” Benjamin asked.

I stroked his tiny ears and grinned. “Of course not, my little mousey,” I sighed. “I love you too much!”

Then I hugged Thea and Trap, too.



“You were right, Stiltons,” I said. “This course was the best thing for me. I’m cured!”

The same yellow jeep took us back to the airport from **CAMP**. Then we boarded a plane to New Mouse City. I couldn’t wait to get there.



As we were flying home, I thought about everything that had happened to me. I had faced my fears and I had met **four** great new friends. **Five**, if you counted Penelope! Yes, this experience had taught me a lot of things.

Like it’s much easier to overcome a problem if you tackle it together. And a bucketful of icy water is a terrible way to wake up in the morning!





TELL ME EVERYTHING, PLEASE!

The next morning, I went to see Dr. Shrinkfur. “Tell me everything, please!” he insisted.

“You were right, Doctor!” I squeaked. “I went to the Rattytrap Jungle and faced all of my fears. I’m cured!”

He seemed very pleased: “I told you it was all up to you! Ach, my niece is very clever!” he murmured.

I sat up straight. **“Ms. Poisonfur is your niece?”** I asked.

“Yes, vell, it was I who gave her name to your relatives,” he confessed. “I was sure it would work. Penelope’s style can be a little vacky, but I knew she was the only one who could help you.”



Fear of the dark!



Snakes!



Heights!



scorpions!



spiders!





IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO THIS . . .

So I guess that's the end of my story. It really all boils down to this:

I'm no longer afraid of **FLYING!**

I'm no longer afraid of the **DARK!**

I'm no longer afraid of **SPIDERS!**

I'm no longer afraid of **SNAKES!**

As I said, I'm cured!

I'M NOT AFRAID!

I'M NOT AFRAID!

I'M NOT AFRAID!

Oh, well, there is still one thing.



I'm not afraid!



I'm still afraid of **CATS!**

But then again, Dr. Shrinkfur says that's perfectly normal. After all, I am a mouse!



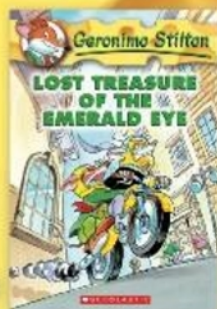
AFTER ALL...

I AM

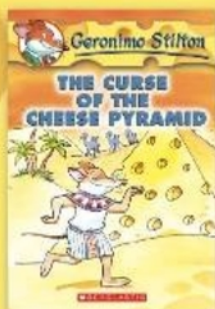
A MOUSE!



**Don't miss
any of my
fabumouse
adventures!**



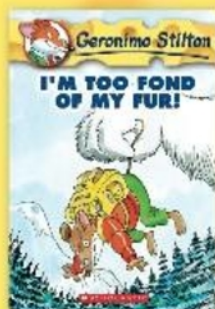
**#1 Lost Treasure
of the Emerald Eye**



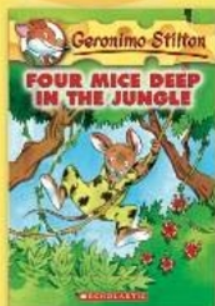
**#2 The Curse
of the Cheese
Pyramid**



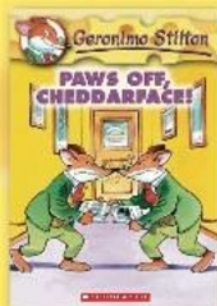
**#3 Cat and
Mouse in a
Haunted House**



**#4 I'm Too Fond
of My Fur!**



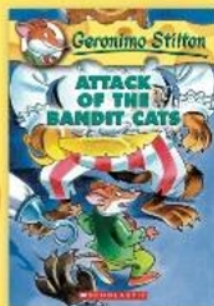
**#5 Four Mice
Deep in the Jungle**



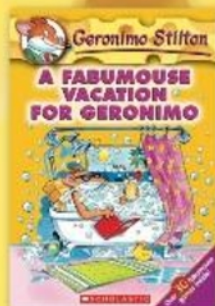
**#6 Paws Off,
Cheddarface!**



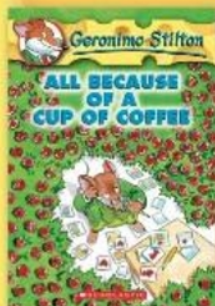
**#7 Red Pizzas for
a Blue Count**



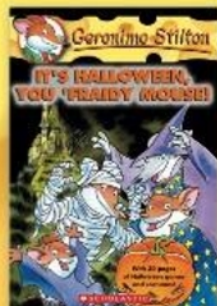
**#8 Attack of the
Bandit Cats**



**#9 A Fabumouse
Vacation for
Geronimo**



**#10 All Because of
a Cup of Coffee**



**#11 It's
Halloween, You
'Fraidy Mouse!**



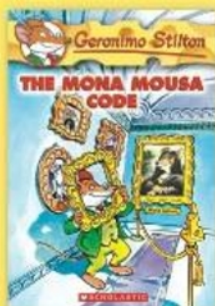
**#12 Merry
Christmas,
Geronimo!**



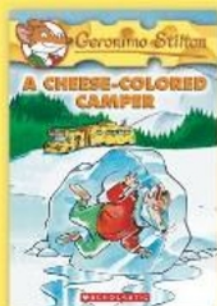
**#13 The Phantom
of the Subway**



**#14 The Temple of
the Ruby of Fire**



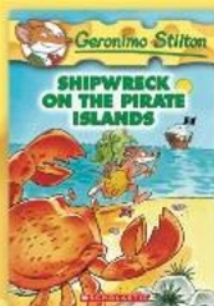
**#15 The Mona
Mousa Code**



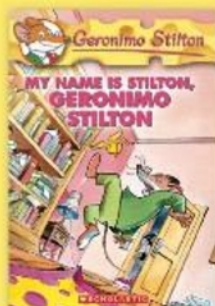
**#16 A Cheese-
Colored Camper**



**#17 Watch Your
Whiskers, Stilton!**



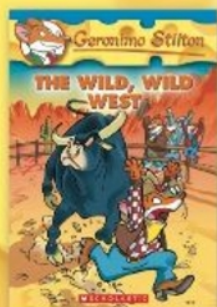
**#18 Shipwreck on
the Pirate Islands**



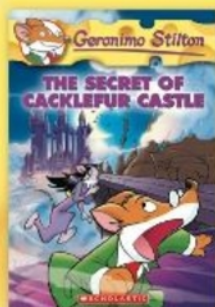
**#19 My Name Is
Stilton, Geronimo
Stilton**



#20 Surf's Up,
Geronimo!



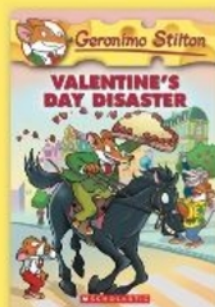
#21 The Wild,
Wild West



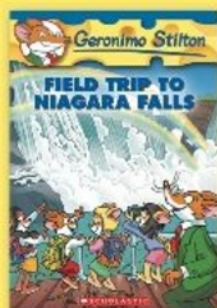
#22 The Secret
of Cacklefur
Castle



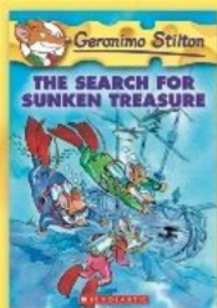
A Christmas Tale



#23 Valentine's
Day Disaster



#24 Field Trip to
Niagara Falls



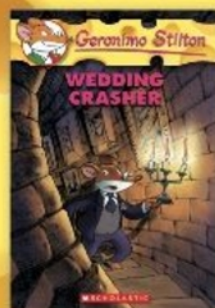
#25 The Search
for Sunken
Treasure



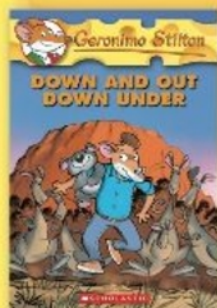
#26 The Mummy
with No Name



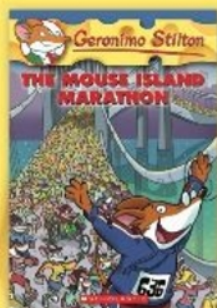
#27 The
Christmas Toy
Factory



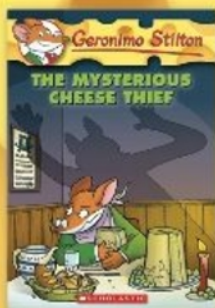
#28 Wedding
Crasher



#29 Down and
Out Down Under



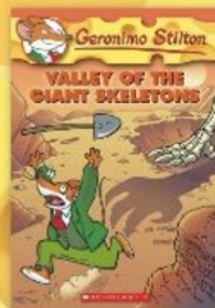
#30 The Mouse
Island Marathon



#31 The
Mysterious
Cheese Thief



Christmas
Catastrophe



#32 Valley of the
Giant Skeletons



#33 Geronimo
and the Gold
Medal Mystery



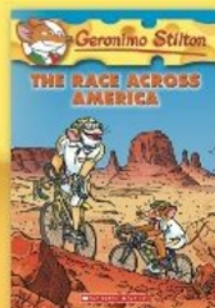
#34 Geronimo
Stilton, Secret
Agent



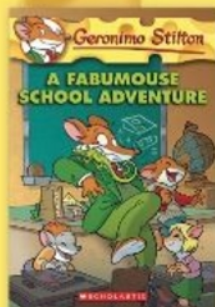
#35 A Very Merry
Christmas



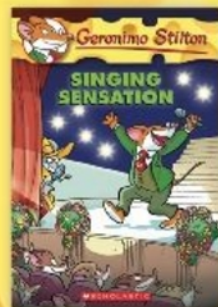
#36 Geronimo's
Valentine



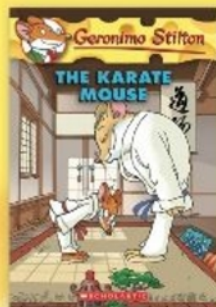
#37 The Race
Across America



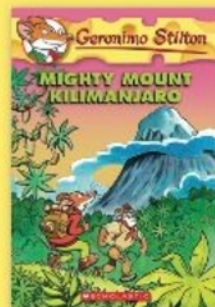
#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure



#39 Singing Sensation



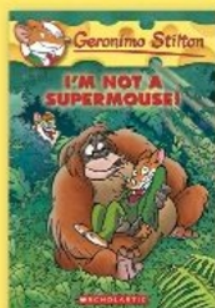
#40 The Karate Mouse



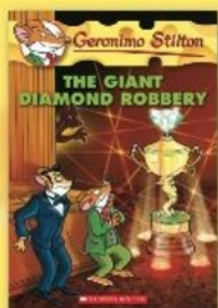
#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro



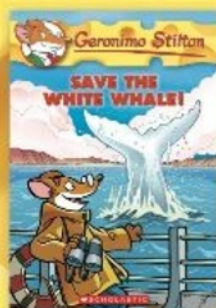
#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



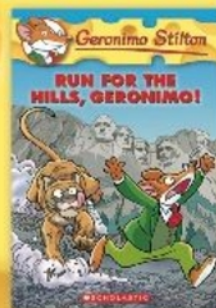
#44 The Giant Diamond Robbery



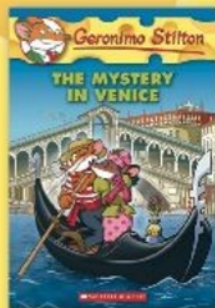
#45 Save the White Whale!



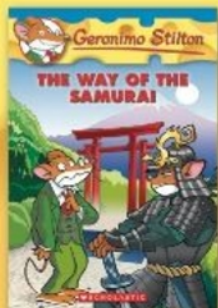
#46 The Haunted Castle



#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!



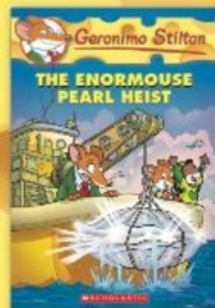
#48 The Mystery in Venice



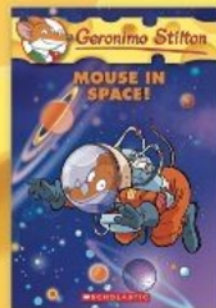
#49 The Way of the Samurai



#50 This Hotel Is Haunted



#51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist



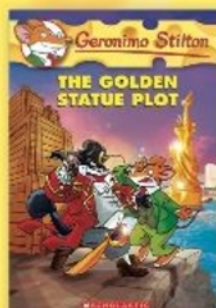
#52 Mouse in Space!



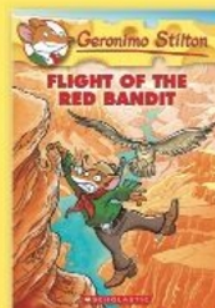
#53 Rumble in the Jungle



#54 Get into Gear, Stilton!



#55 The Golden Statue Plot



#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



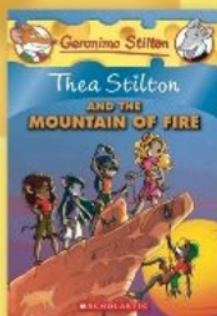
Special Edition: The Hunt for the Golden Book



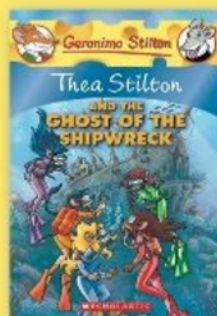
**Check out
these exciting
Thea Sisters
adventures!**



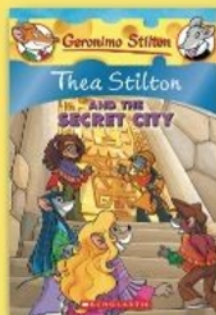
**Thea Stilton and the
Dragon's Code**



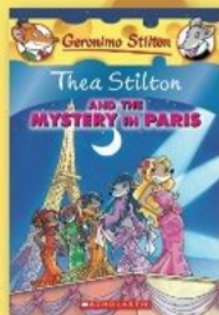
**Thea Stilton and the
Mountain of Fire**



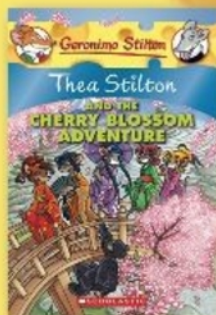
**Thea Stilton and the
Ghost of the Shipwreck**



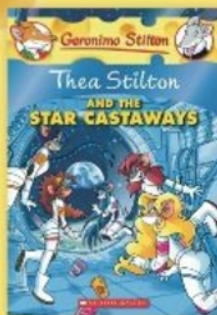
**Thea Stilton and the
Secret City**



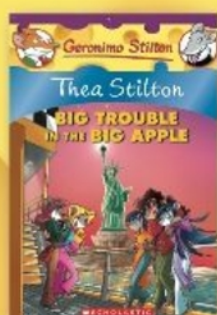
**Thea Stilton and the
Mystery in Paris**



**Thea Stilton and the
Cherry Blossom Adventure**



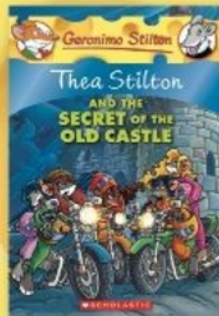
**Thea Stilton and the
Star Castaways**



**Thea Stilton: Big Trouble
in the Big Apple**



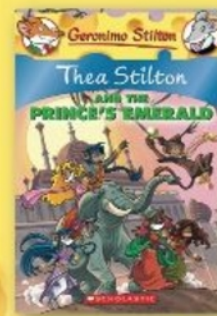
**Thea Stilton and the
Ice Treasure**



**Thea Stilton and the
Secret of the Old Castle**



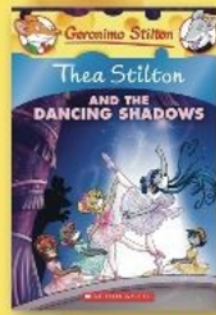
**Thea Stilton and the
Blue Scarab Hunt**



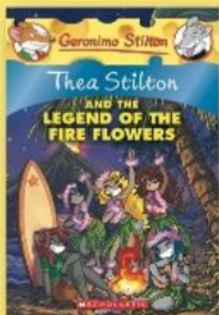
**Thea Stilton and the
Prince's Emerald**



**Thea Stilton and the Mystery
on the Orient Express**



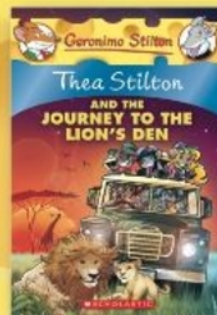
**Thea Stilton and the
Dancing Shadows**



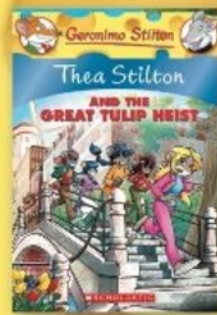
**Thea Stilton and the
Legend of the Fire
Flowers**



**Thea Stilton and the
Spanish Dance Mission**



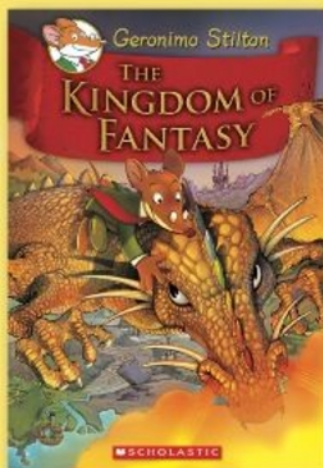
**Thea Stilton and the
Journey to the Lion's Den**



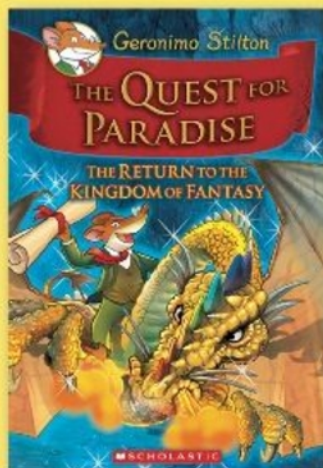
**Thea Stilton and the
Great Tulip Heist**



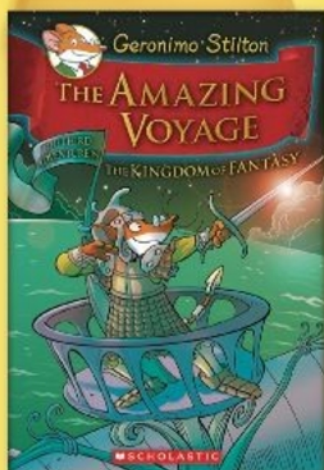
Be sure
to read all
my adventures
in the Kingdom
of Fantasy!



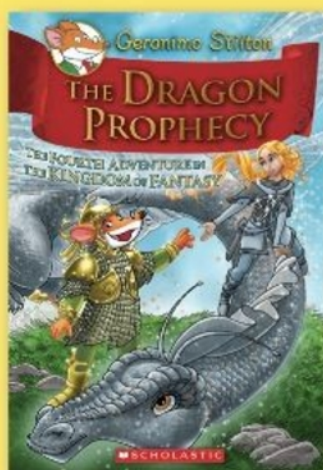
**THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



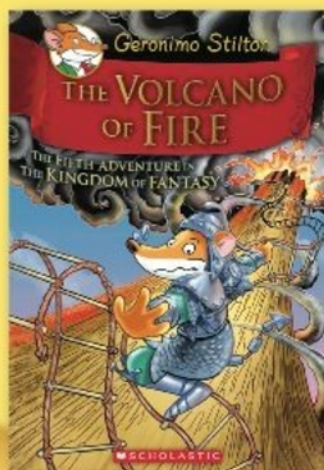
**THE QUEST FOR
PARADISE:
THE RETURN TO THE
KINGDOM OF FANTASY**



**THE AMAZING
VOYAGE:
THE THIRD ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



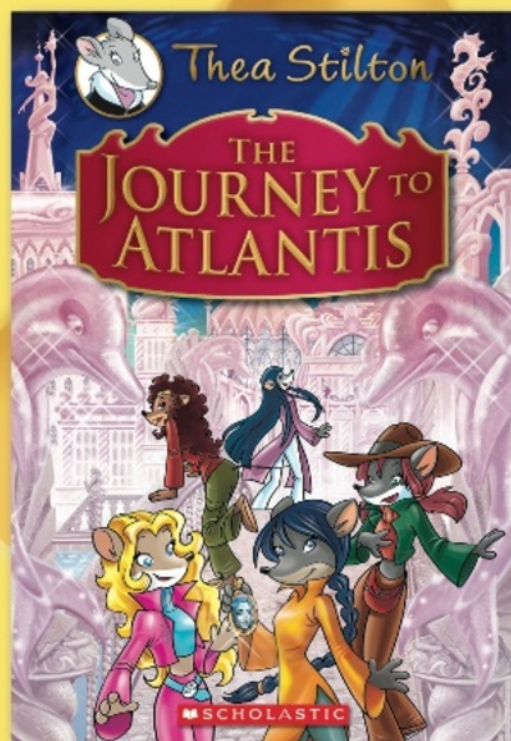
**THE DRAGON
PROPHECY:
THE FOURTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



**THE VOLCANO
OF FIRE:
THE FIFTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



Check out
these very
special editions
featuring me
and the Thea
Sisters!



THE JOURNEY
TO ATLANTIS

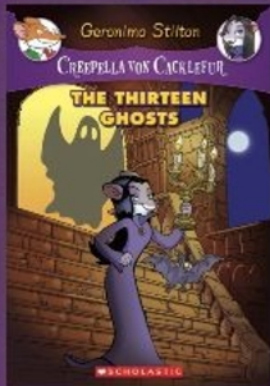


THE SECRET OF
THE FAIRIES

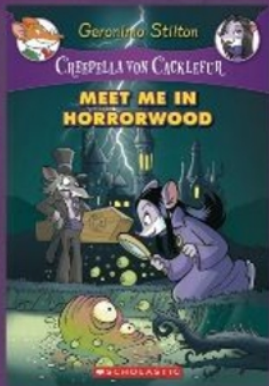


Meet CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

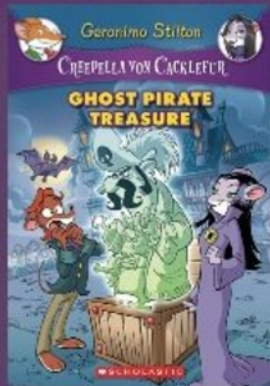
I, *Geronimo Stilton*, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as **spooky** as my friend **CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR**! She is an enchanting and **MYSTERIOUS** mouse with a pet bat named **Bitewing**. **YIKES!** I'm a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think **CREEPELLA** and her family are **AWFULLY** fascinating. I can't wait for you to read all about **CREEPELLA** in these **fa-mouse-ly funny** and **spectacularly spooky** tales!



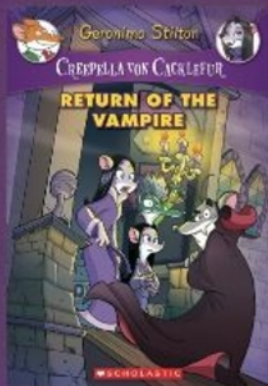
#1 The Thirteen Ghosts



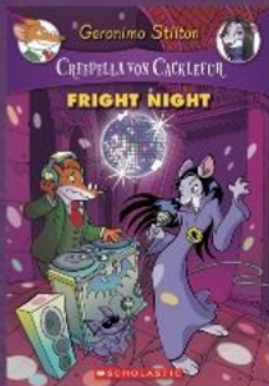
#2 Meet Me In Horrorwood



#3 Ghost Pirate Treasure



#4 Return of the Vampire

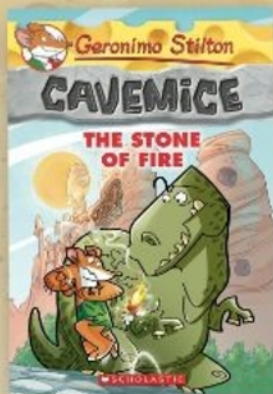


#5 Fright Night

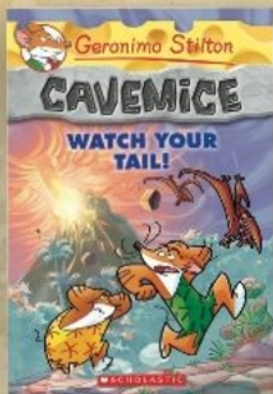


Meet GERONIMO STILTONOOT

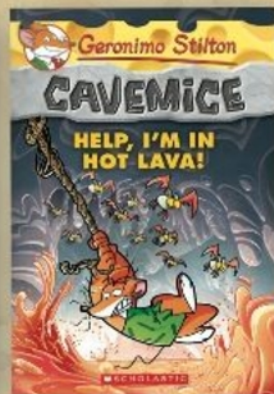
He is a cavemouse — Geronimo Stilton's ancient ancestor! He runs the stone newspaper in the prehistoric village of Old Mouse City. From dealing with dinosaurs to dodging meteorites, his life in the Stone Age is full of adventure!



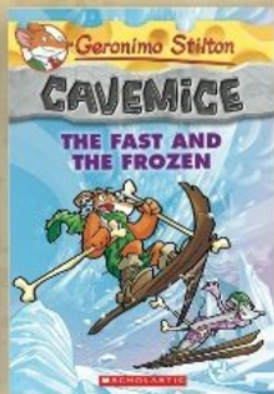
#1 The Stone of Fire



#2 Watch Your Tail!



#3 Help, I'm in Hot Lava!



#4 The Fast and the Frozen



Join me and my friends on
a journey through time in
this very special edition!



THE JOURNEY
THROUGH TIME

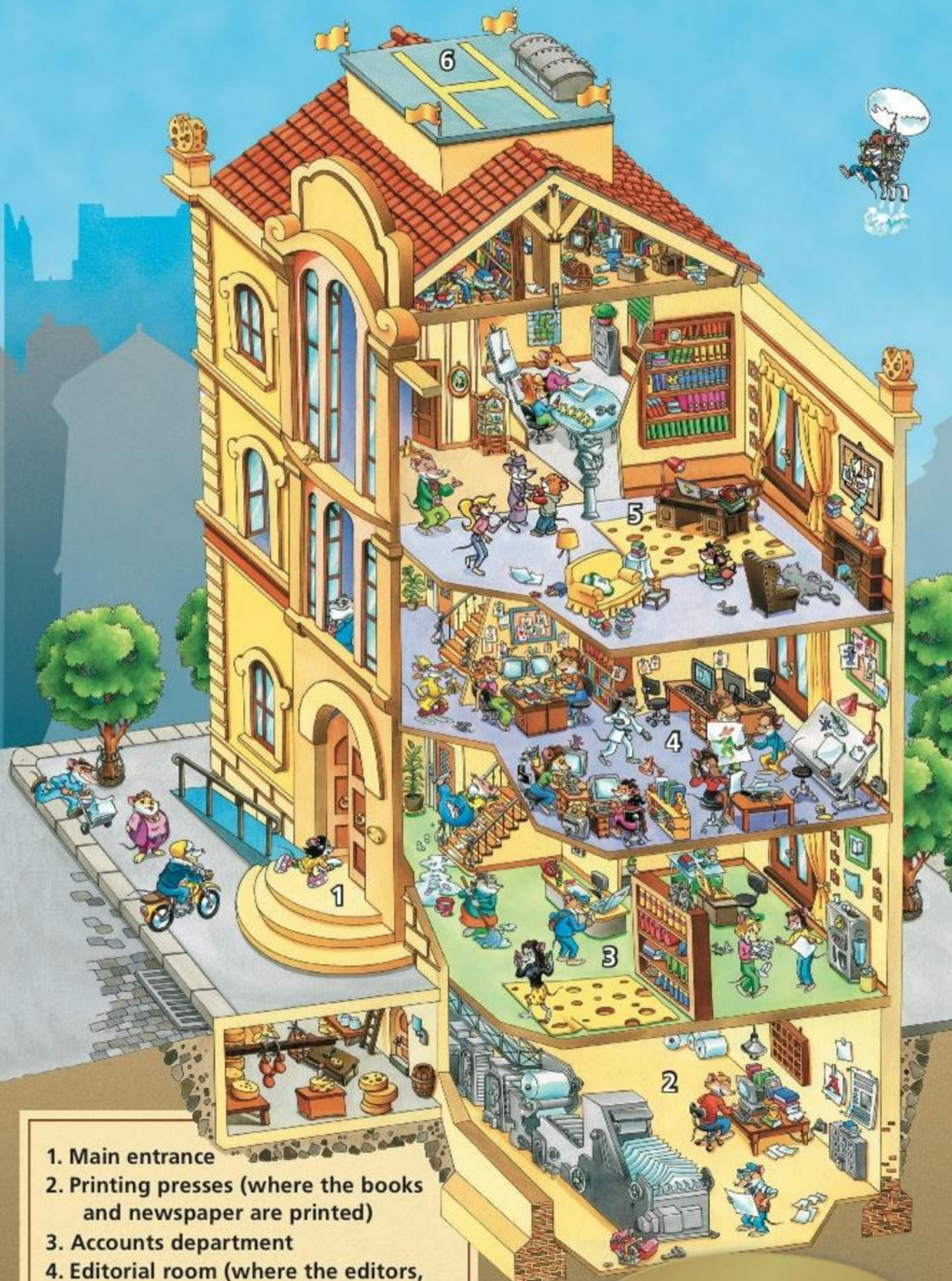
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, **GERONIMO STILTON** is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

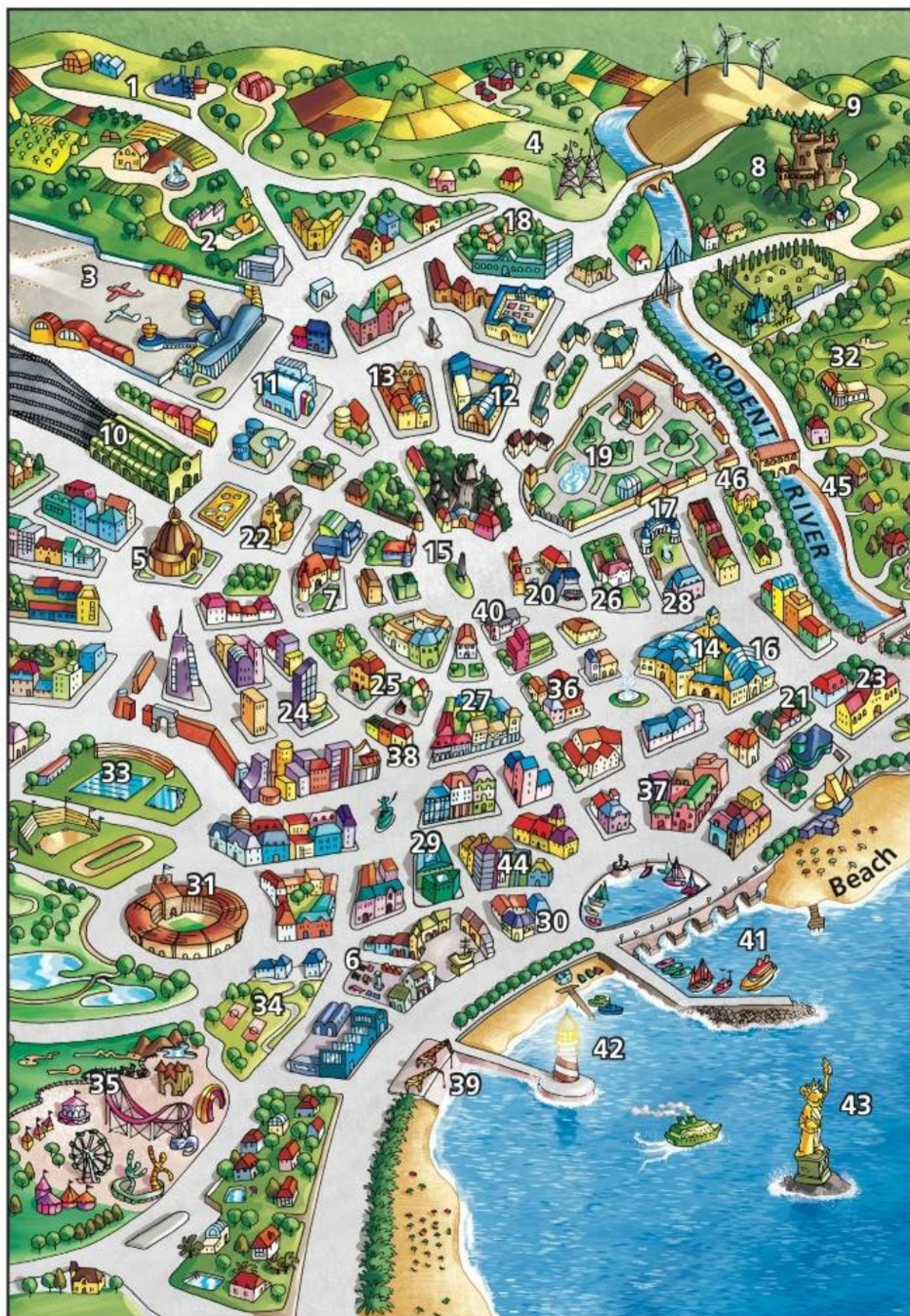
Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.



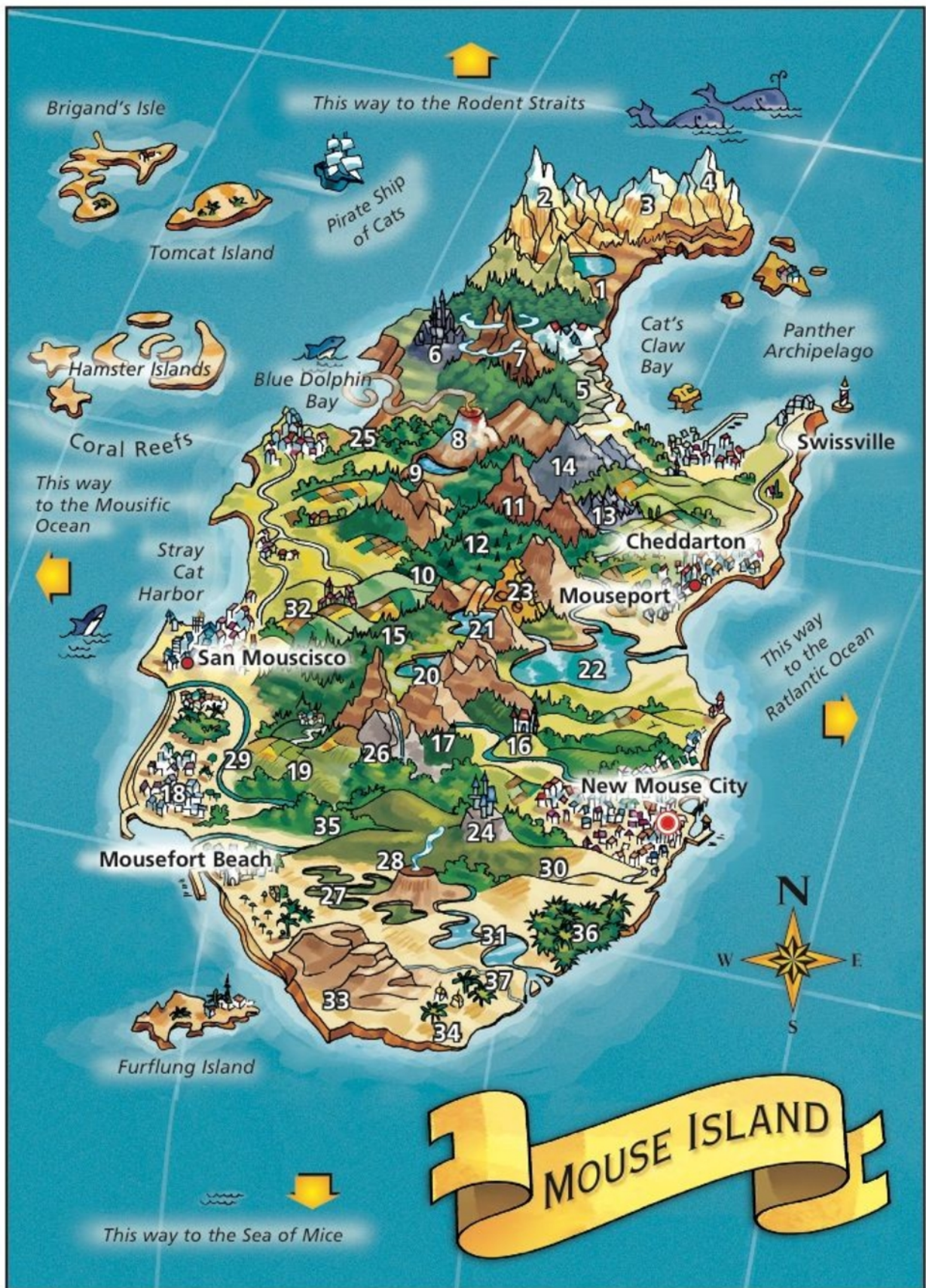
1. Main entrance
2. Printing presses (where the books and newspaper are printed)
3. Accounts department
4. Editorial room (where the editors, illustrators, and designers work)
5. Geronimo Stilton's office
6. Helicopter landing pad

*THE RODENT'S
GAZETTE*



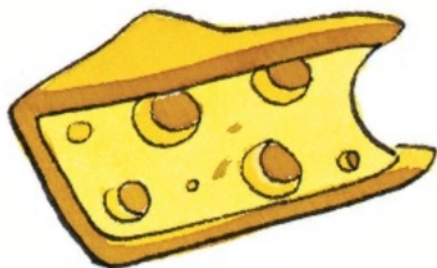
Map of New Mouse City

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Industrial Zone | 24. <i>The Daily Rat</i> |
| 2. Cheese Factories | 25. <i>The Rodent's Gazette</i> |
| 3. Angorat International Airport | 26. Trap's House |
| 4. WRAT Radio and Television Station | 27. Fashion District |
| 5. Cheese Market | 28. The Mouse House Restaurant |
| 6. Fish Market | 29. Environmental Protection Center |
| 7. Town Hall | 30. Harbor Office |
| 8. Snotnose Castle | 31. Mousidon Square Garden |
| 9. The Seven Hills of Mouse Island | 32. Golf Course |
| 10. Mouse Central Station | 33. Swimming Pool |
| 11. Trade Center | 34. Tennis Courts |
| 12. Movie Theater | 35. Curlyfur Island Amusement Park |
| 13. Gym | 36. Geronimo's House |
| 14. Catnegie Hall | 37. Historic District |
| 15. Singing Stone Plaza | 38. Public Library |
| 16. The Gouda Theater | 39. Shipyard |
| 17. Grand Hotel | 40. Thea's House |
| 18. Mouse General Hospital | 41. New Mouse Harbor |
| 19. Botanical Gardens | 42. Luna Lighthouse |
| 20. Cheap Junk for Less (Trap's store) | 43. The Statue of Liberty |
| 21. Aunt Sweetfur and Benjamin's House | 44. Hercule Poirat's Office |
| 22. Museum of Modern Art | 45. Petunia Pretty Paws's House |
| 23. University and Library | 46. Grandfather William's House |



Map of Mouse Island

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Big Ice Lake | 21. Lake Lakelake |
| 2. Frozen Fur Peak | 22. Lake Lakelakelake |
| 3. Slipperyslopes Glacier | 23. Cheddar Crag |
| 4. Coldcreeps Peak | 24. Cannycat Castle |
| 5. Ratzikistan | 25. Valley of the Giant Sequoia |
| 6. Transratania | 26. Cheddar Springs |
| 7. Mount Vamp | 27. Sulfurous Swamp |
| 8. Roastedrat Volcano | 28. Old Reliable Geyser |
| 9. Brimstone Lake | 29. Vole Vale |
| 10. Poopedcat Pass | 30. Ravingrat Ravine |
| 11. Stinko Peak | 31. Gnat Marshes |
| 12. Dark Forest | 32. Munster Highlands |
| 13. Vain Vampires Valley | 33. Mousehara Desert |
| 14. Goose Bumps Gorge | 34. Oasis of the Sweaty Camel |
| 15. The Shadow Line Pass | 35. Cabbagehead Hill |
| 16. Penny Pincher Castle | 36. Rattytrap Jungle |
| 17. Nature Reserve Park | 37. Rio Mosquito |
| 18. Las Ratayas Marinas | |
| 19. Fossil Forest | |
| 20. Lake Lake | |



Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
till the next book.
It'll be another whisker-licking-good
adventure, and that's a promise!



Geronimo Stilton



GERONIMO STILTON



THEA



TRAP



BENJAMIN

Who is Geronimo Stilton?

That's me! I run a newspaper, but my true passion is writing adventure stories. Here in New Mouse City, the capital of Mouse Island, my books are all bestsellers! My stories are funny, fa-mouse-ly funny. They are whisker-licking-good tales, and that's a promise!

FOUR MICE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

I have never been a brave mouse . . . but lately, my fears were taking over my life! So Thea and Trap decided to cure me. They dragged me away on an airplane (I'm afraid of flying!) all the way to the jungle. There I was forced to eat bug soup, climb trees as tall as skyscrapers, swim in raging rivers, and even wrangle snakes! How would a 'fraidy mouse like me ever survive?

 **SCHOLASTIC**

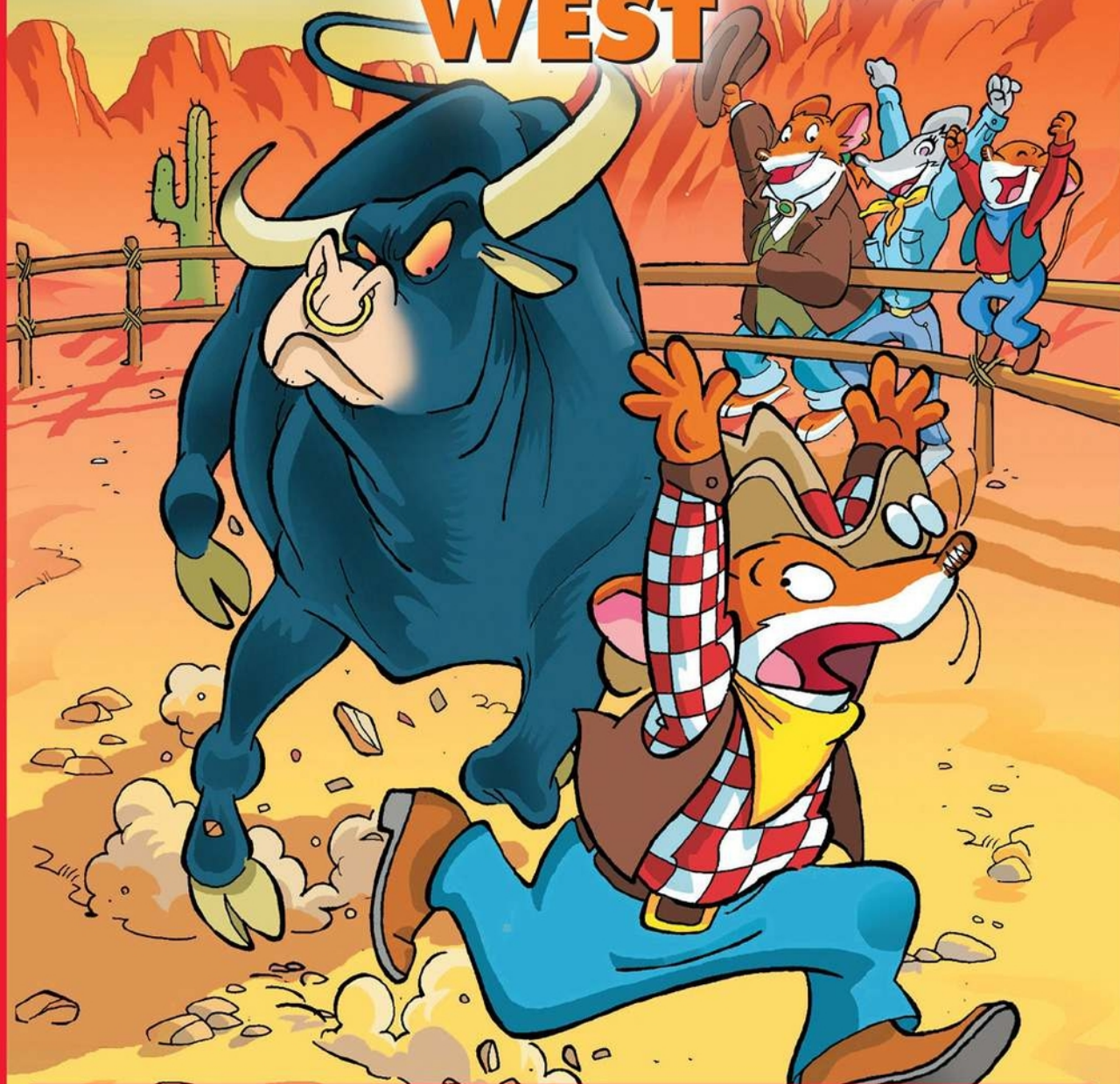
www.scholastic.com

RL3 007-010



Geronimo Stilton

THE WILD, WILD WEST



SCHOLASTIC

Dear mouse friends,
Welcome to the world of



Geronimo Stilton



THE RODENT'S GAZETTE

EDITORIAL STAFF





Geronimo Stilton

A learned and brainy
mouse; editor of
The Rodent's Gazette



Thea Stilton

Geronimo's sister and
special correspondent at
The Rodent's Gazette



Trap Stilton

An awful joker;
Geronimo's cousin and
owner of the store
Cheap Junk for Less



Benjamin Stilton

A sweet and loving
nine-year-old mouse;
Geronimo's favorite
nephew

Geronimo Stilton

THE WILD, WILD WEST



Scholastic Inc.

New York Toronto London Auckland Sydney
Mexico City New Delhi Hong Kong Buenos Aires

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, please contact Atlantyca S.p.A., Via Leopardi 8, 20123 Milan, Italy; e-mail foreignrights@atlantyca.it, www.atlantyca.com.

eISBN 978-0-545-39206-8

Copyright © 2005 by Edizioni Piemme S.p.A., Corso Como 15, 20154 Milan, Italy.

International Rights © Atlantyca S.p.A.

English translation © 2005 by Atlantyca S.p.A.

GERONIMO STILTON names, characters, and related indicia are copyright, trademark, and exclusive license of Atlantyca S.p.A. All rights reserved. The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami.

www.geronimostilton.com

Published by Scholastic Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.
SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Stilton is the name of a famous English cheese. It is a registered trademark of the Stilton Cheese Makers' Association. For more information, go to www.stiltoncheese.com.

Text by Geronimo Stilton

Original title *Quattro topi nel far west!*

Cover Giuseppe Ferrario

Illustrations by Larry Keys and Ratterto Rattonchi

Graphics by Merenguita Gingermouse and Zeppola Zap

Special thanks to Kathryn Cristaldi

Interior design by Kay Petronio

First printing, July 2005



THEY SAY I'M A SCAREDY MOUSE

Do you know me? My name is Stilton,
Geronimo Stilton.

I am the editor of the most **POPULAR**
paper in New Mouse City. It's called *The
Rodent's Gazette*. Most mice would agree,
I'm a *pretty brainy rodent*. And I
absolutely LOVE to read.





After a hard day at the office,
I like to relax in my cozy mouse hole.

I slip into my fluffy cat-fur slippers.
Then I settle down with a good book

I make myself a nice cup of hot cheddar tea.  Yum!

And sometimes I put on some soft music.

Of course, some rodents might say I am
a little on the boring side. Like my sister
Thea and my cousin Trap. They make fun of

Ah, what a perfect way to escape from the rat race.





me because I **DON'T** like to travel. They say I'm a **SCAREDY MOUSE**. You see, I am not the adventurous type. But that is because...

...I GET SEASICK

... Heights make me dizzy

...and I'm a worrywart

Now, you are probably wondering what I am doing in this adventure. It takes place in the wild, **WILD WEST**. Out West you will find sun-scorched deserts, raging bulls, and even poisonous snakes.

Why would I, Geronimo "Scaredy Mouse" Stilton, travel to a place like that?

Read this book and you'll understand....



... I get seasick



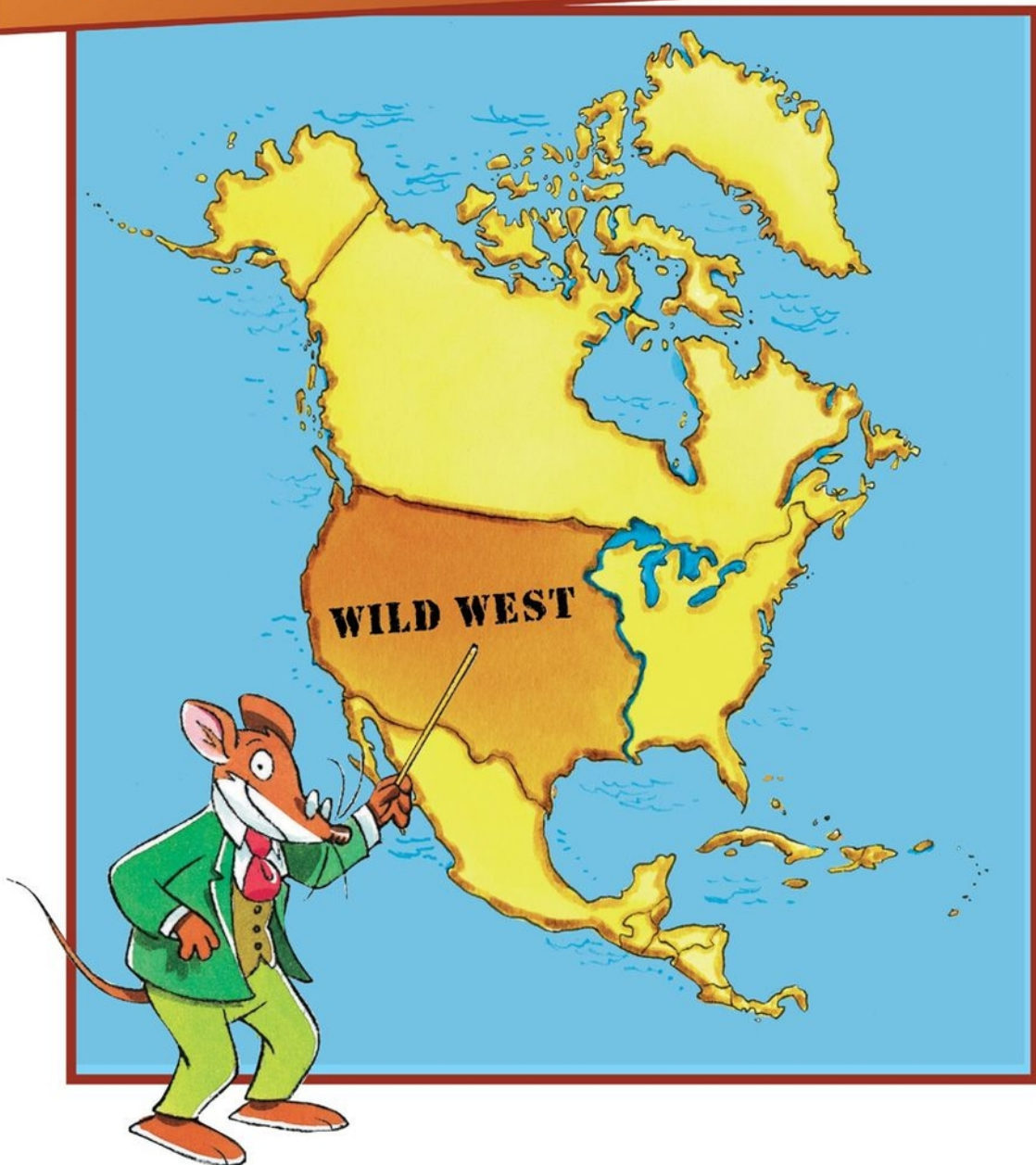
... heights make me dizzy



... and I'm a worrywart

**HERE IS THE MAP OF
NORTH AMERICA.**

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE WILD WEST IS?



THE WILD WEST AND THE NATIVE AMERICANS

The term Wild West began to be used in the 1800s to describe the regions of the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, which extend west of the Mississippi River to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. Native Americans, formerly called Indians, inhabited these immense territories.

These peoples, also called redskins for their custom of smearing red earth over their entire bodies, were made up of many tribes. Here are the better-known ones:

APACHE: Brave warriors who were feared for their raids on settlers for food and livestock. Two chiefs became legendary: Cochise and Geronimo.

BLACKFEET: Able shoemakers, the Blackfeet people made moccasins of dark skins—that's how they got their name. They used dogs instead of horses to carry loads.

CHEROKEE: The Cherokee were devoted to hunting as well as farming. Around 1820, Chief Sequoya invented an alphabet made up of eighty-five symbols in order to better communicate with white people.

CHEYENNE: The Cheyenne people traveled around the plains, living in tepees. These tents were made of animal skins and formed a cone that was easy to pack and carry. The Cheyenne fought side by side with the great chiefs of the Sioux tribe in the struggle to free the Indian people.

COMANCHE: Famous for their horse-riding ability, the Comanche fought to defend their territory from white hunters who killed the buffalo and other wildlife.

SIoux: This tribe of the Great Plains was subdivided into three groups: the Dakota, the Nakota, and the Lakota. Famous chiefs of the Sioux included Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Red Cloud.



FOUR MICE IN THE WILD WEST

It was **HOT**.

It was dry.

It was a bad, bad fur day. Even my tail was sweating.

Oh, what I wouldn't give for a cold **CHEDDAR ice POP** from my mega-huge fridge. Too bad I couldn't get one. Do you want to know why?

Because I was in the Arizona **desert**.

Yes, mouse fans, I, Geronimo Stilton, was

in the



WILD, WILD WEST!





Lucky for me, I wasn't alone. My sister Thea, my cousin Trap, and my little nephew Benjamin were with me. Together we were crossing the scorching desert.

Have you ever been to a desert? There is not much to see. Just **SAND**, rocks, and cacti.



The sand burned my paws. I kept tripping over the rocks. And my tail was getting ripped to shreds on all those pointy cactus needles. **YOUC!**

Worst of all, I was dying of thirst. I shook my canteen. It was **EMPTY**.

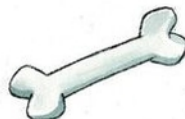


Just then a dark shadow fell over me. I gulped. Something told me it wasn't Santa Mouse flying by on his way to his summer place. I looked up.

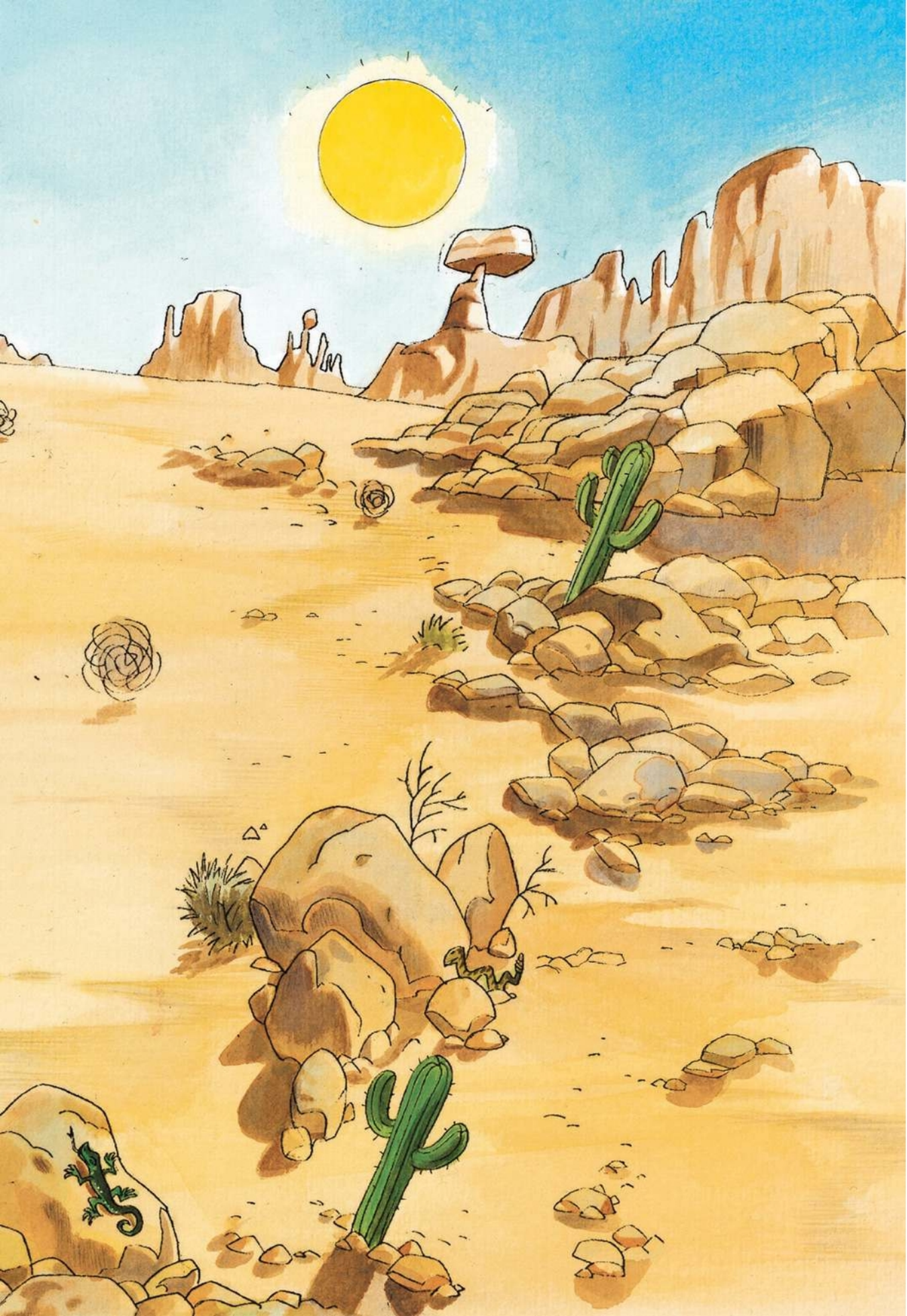


Rancid rat hairs! It was a hungry pack of **VULTURES** waiting to lick our bones.

This place was a total **NIGHTMARE!**





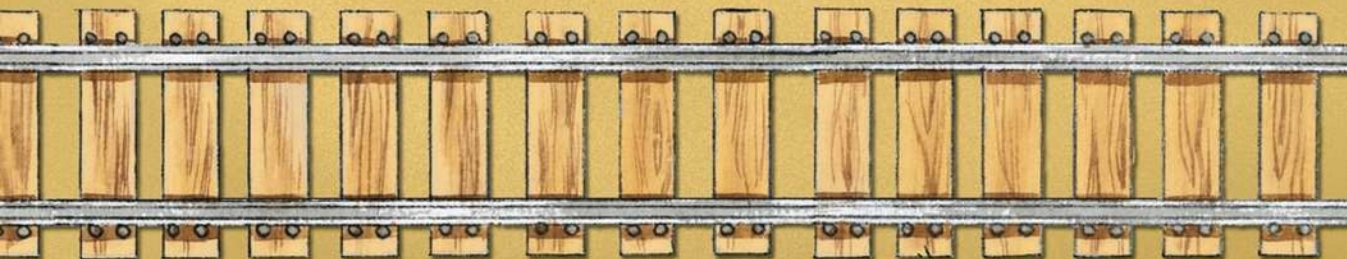
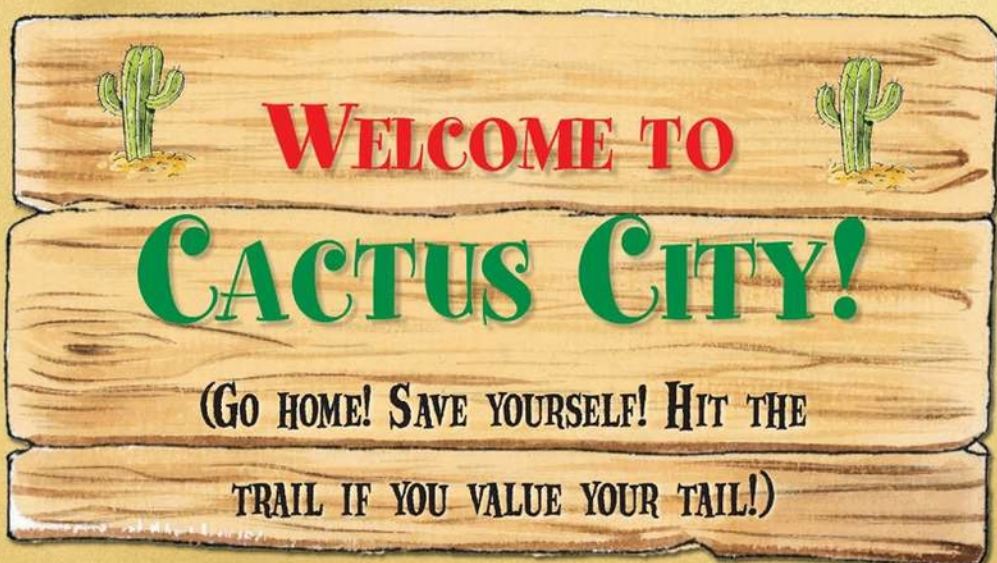




WELCOME TO CACTUS CITY!

After a billion years, we finally reached a dusty set of railroad tracks.

Cheesecake! We were saved! The tracks led us to a wooden sign. In big letters it read:



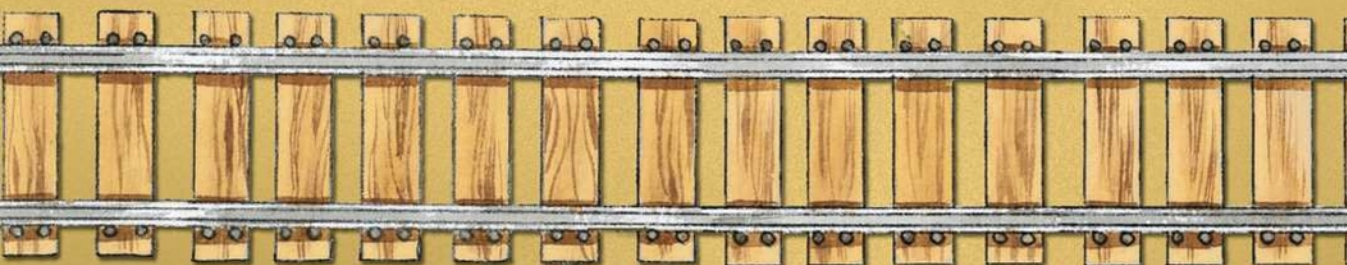


I twisted my tail up in knots. “Uh-oh,” I gulped. “This doesn’t look **GOOD**. This doesn’t look **GOOD** at all. In fact, this looks **DOWNRIGHT BAD**, if you ask me.”

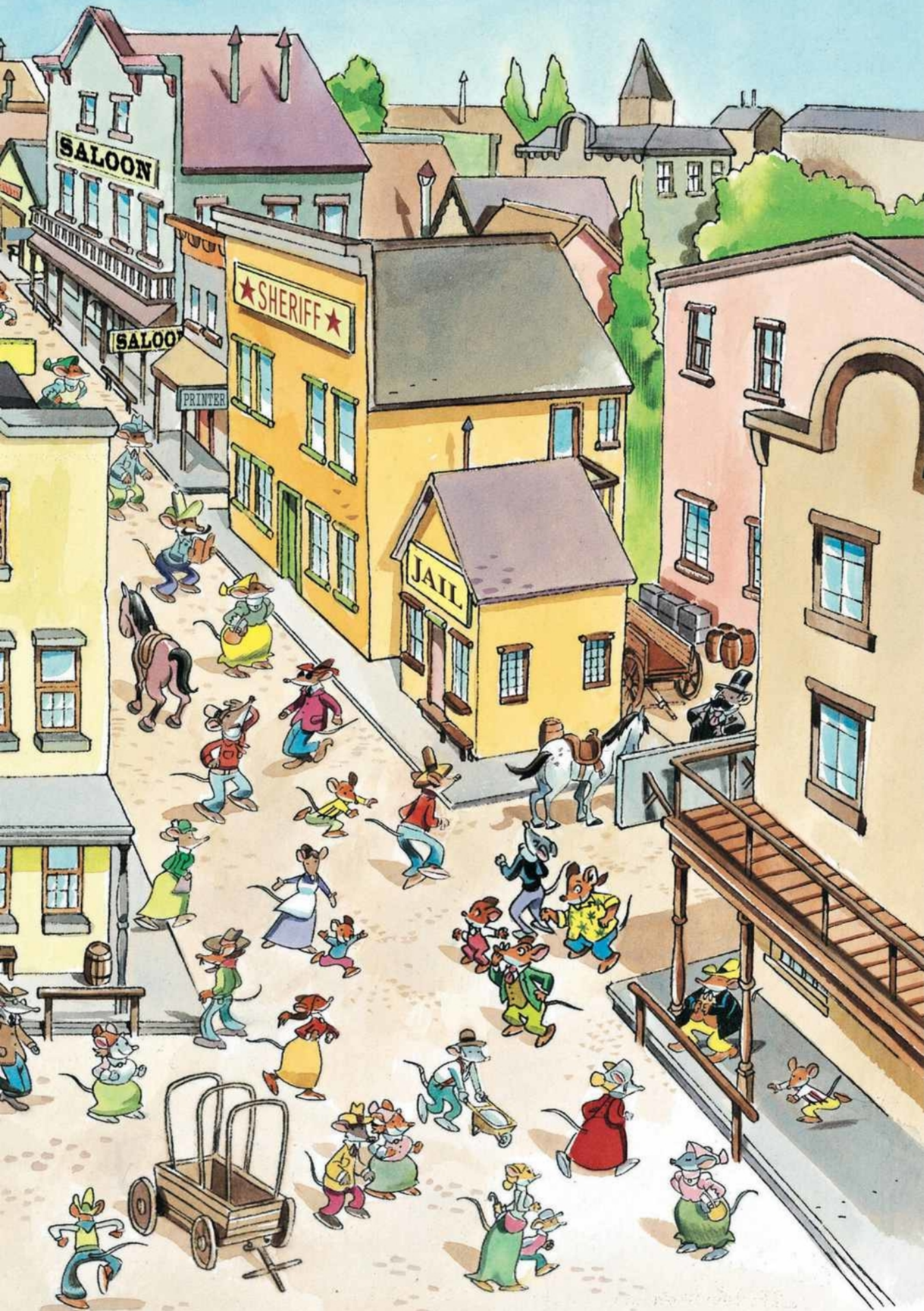
Trap pushed me forward. “Oh, don’t be such a scaredy mouse, Germeister,” he snorted. He gave me another shove.

I tumbled headfirst into a cactus. “Don’t push me! I can’t stand it when you push me!” I yelled, picking **NEEDLES** out of my fur.

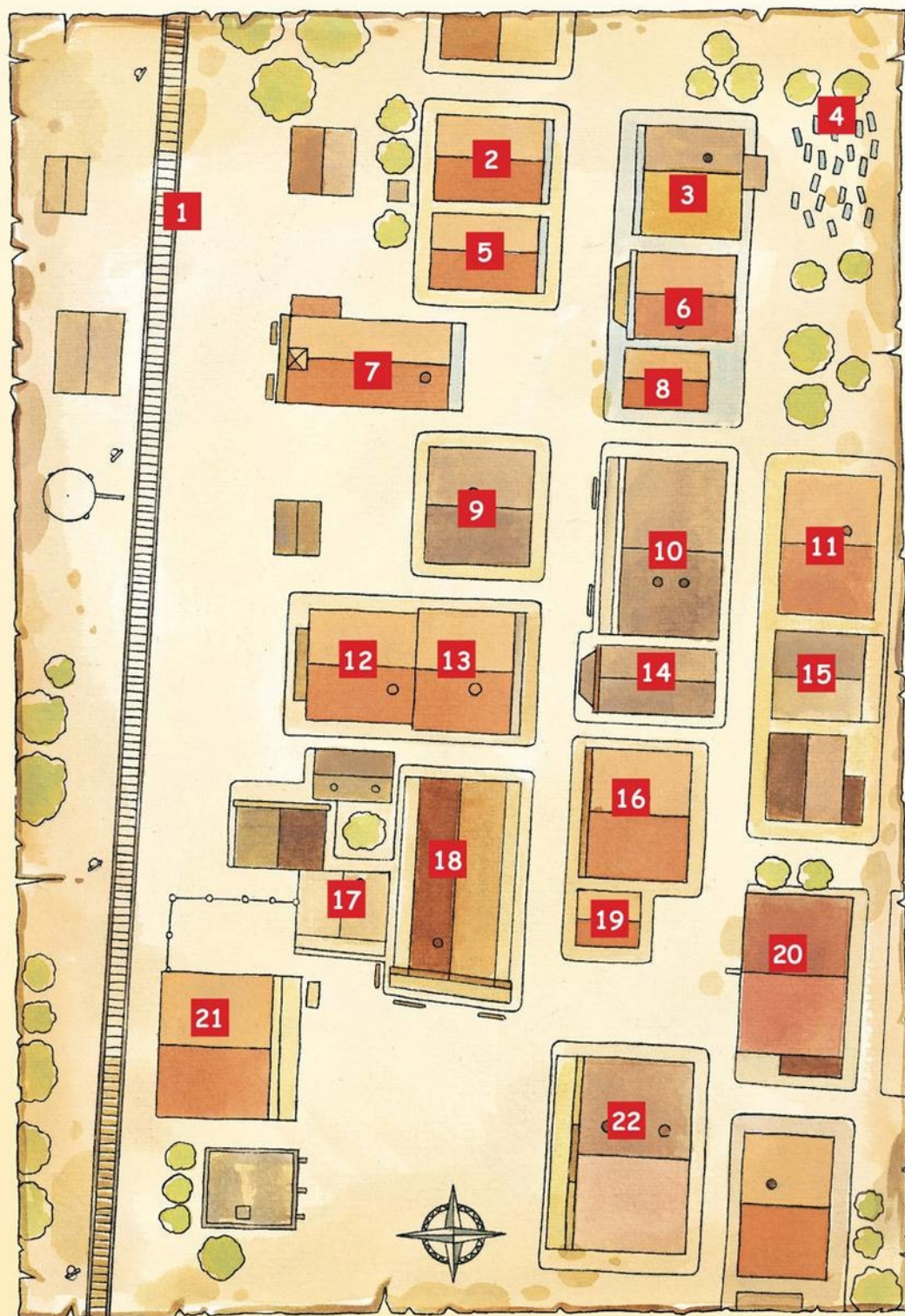
Have I told you my cousin Trap is the most **ANNOYING** rodent on the planet?







CACTUS CITY





MAP OF CACTUS CITY



1 Railroad

2 Lawyer

3 Undertaker

4 Cemetery

5 Courthouse

6 Dress Shop

7 Barn

8 Blacksmith

9 General Store

10 Saloon

11 School

12 Railroad Station

13 Depot

14 Printer

15 Schoolteacher's House

16 Sheriff

17 Trading Post

18 Bank

19 Jail

20 Doctor's House

21 Hotel

22 Infirmary



THE LAW IN THE WILD WEST

At first, no one was concerned with public order in the towns of the Wild West. Then the government of the United States sent sheriffs and judges to keep order and to enforce the law.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH CACTUS CITY?

A wiry old mouse stood in front of the railroad station. He was dressed in a uniform.

“**Howdy**, strangers, what brings you to Cactus City?” he called, waving us over. “The name’s Choo-Choo Cheddar, that’s C.C. for short,” he chattered. “I lend a paw down here at the **station**. Yep, been working here for some twenty years. I sell tickets, carry bags. Yep, you name it, I’ve done it. Sometimes I even...”

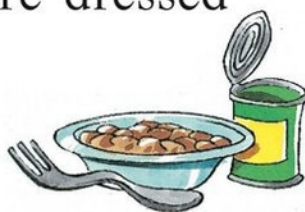
Suddenly C.C. stopped in mid-sentence. I noticed he was staring at us with an **odd** expression on his snout.

“Well, **GOLLY**,” he cried. “You mouselings must have come from way far off yonder. Just



look at your duds. Shucks, you're dressed just like city mice."

C.C. offered us some stewed beans and a sip of water.



"Sorry I can't get you more to drink," he said in a low voice. "Water is hard to come by in these parts." He looked around *nervously*. Then he whispered, "Let me give you some advice, strangers. Get out of town now!"

How strange. What was wrong with Cactus City? It looked like a nice little town to me.

I was still thinking about C.C.'s words



Choo-Choo Cheddar
the Stationmaster



CURLY THE TRAIN
CONDUCTOR



when a train rumbled into the station.

A rat with long, waxed whiskers got off. It was Curly **THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR**.

“Cactus City! Last station before the desert!” he yelled.

No one got off the train. No one stopped in **Cactus City**.

How strange. What was wrong with Cactus City?

We decided to check out the town.

First we passed the **BLACKSMITH'S** shop. A huge musclemouse was hammering



BUCK THE BLACKSMITH



Doc Squeakers



away on a piece of metal. He was making a horseshoe.

A mouse carrying a *doctor's* bag scampered by. "Clear the way!" he squeaked. "Nancy Nibbler's about to have those triplets!"

A plump mouse stuck his head out a building door. It was the *banker*. He looked around nervously. Then he raced back inside.

I wondered why he looked so worried.

Just then I heard a familiar noise. It was a *printing press*!



Rex the Banker



Tommy the Printer



A rat with tiny glasses was busy printing the newspaper. He glanced up at us suspiciously.

We passed by a courthouse. An old *judge* peeked out the door. He looked around. Then he slammed the door shut.

In front of the **saloon**, a rodent sat in a **ROCKING CHAIR**. A big hat covered his face. He stopped rocking when we walked by. How odd. I thought he was napping. But it seemed as if he was hiding from something.

Minutes later, we ran into the **UNDERTAKER**. He shook our paws warmly.

He had a huge grin plastered on his face. *At least one rodent wasn't worried*, I thought. "Welcome to Cactus City, strangers!" The undertaker beamed. "If I can be of service, don't be shy. Today I'm having a two-for-one special. Yessiree, that's two stiffs for the price of one!"



A bucktoothed rodent stood next to him. He held up a shovel. I guess he was a gravedigger. “Just tell me how deep and I’ll dig it!”

I shivered. Then I noticed something else that was strange about Cactus City.

There was no **SHERIFF**. Do you know what a sheriff does? He keeps order in the town. He locks up bad rodents in his jail. Sort of like the Chief of Police in New Mouse City.



BORIS THE UNDERTAKER AND GRIMSLY THE GRAVEDIGGER



IF MY FRIENDS COULD SEE ME NOW

We found the general store in the center of town. Inside, a short, stocky mouse greeted us.

“Howdy, strangers! Welcome to **BLUNT RAT BOB’S!**” he squeaked. “Bob’s the name. Stuff is my game. And, strangers, do you look like you need some stuff! Those duds you’re wearing look **ridiculous!**”



I stared down at my suit. I guess I did look out of place. But ridiculous? No way.

Meanwhile, Bob had run off. He returned a few minutes later with a pawful of **CLOTHES.**

**BOB THE GENERAL
STORE OWNER**

THE STILTON FAMILY...



...WESTERN STYLE!



I pulled on a pair of leather pants, boots with spurs, a checkered shirt, and a cowrat hat. Then I looked at myself in the mirror. I must admit, I looked pretty cool. I felt just like a real **COWRAT**. “If only my friends at *The Rodent’s Gazette* could see me now.”

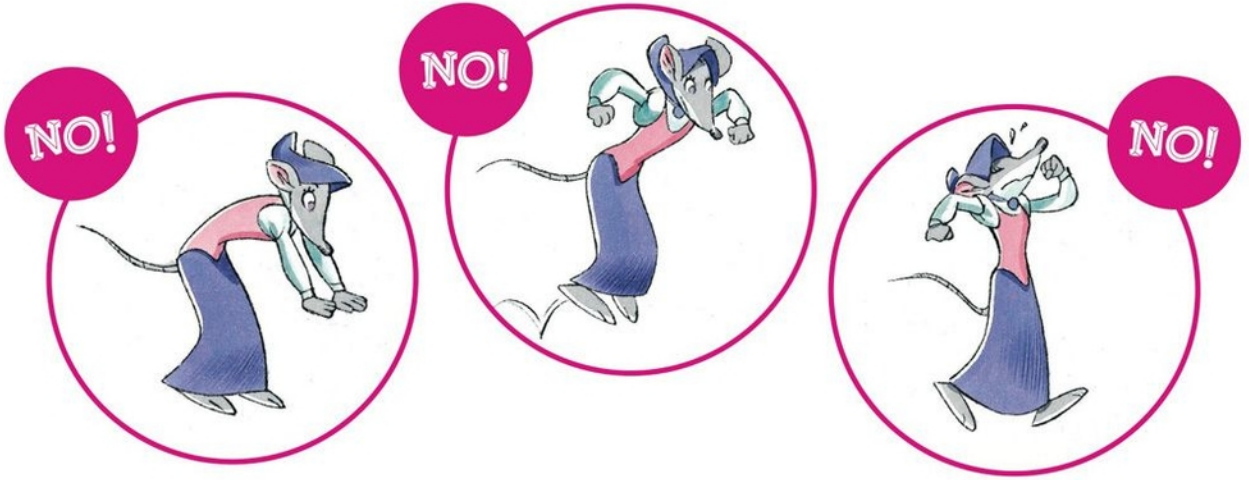
My family seemed just as excited.

Benjamin jumped up and down. “If only my friends at school could see me now!” he exclaimed.

Trap wiggled his tail. “If only my friends down at the Squeak and Chew could see me now,” he chuckled.

Thea winked at her own reflection. Then she tried to take a step. She tried to jump. She tried to run. But her **dress** was so long she couldn’t move. Instead, she fell **flat** on her snout!

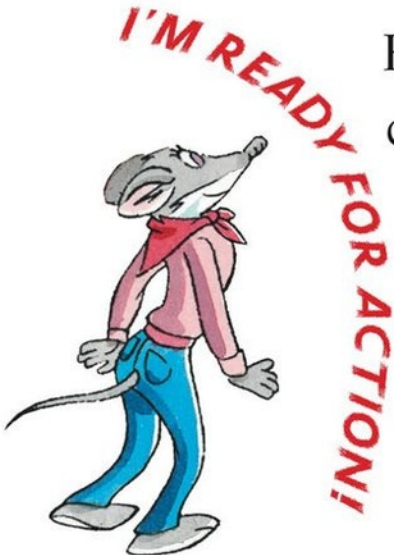
“Thank goodness my friends can’t see me



now,” she snorted. She had Bob bring her a pair of pants, a shirt, and a pretty bandanna.

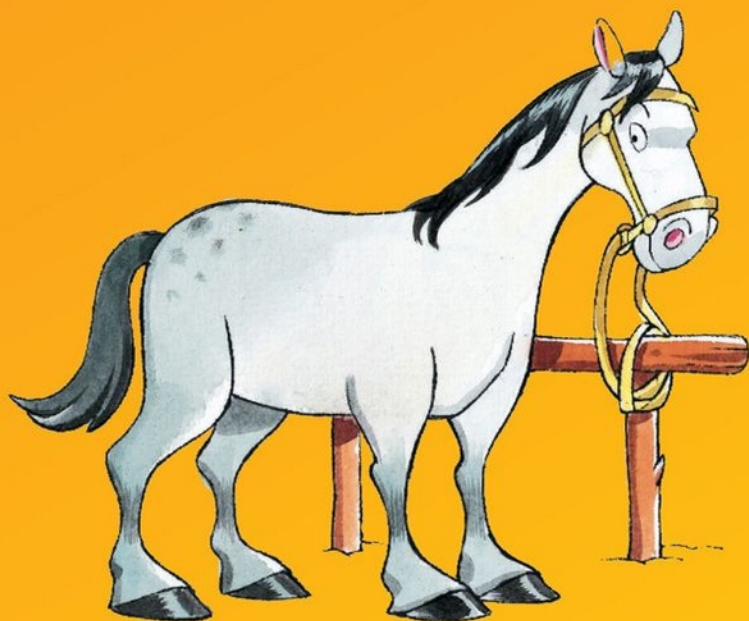
“That’s better,” she nodded. “Now all I need is a **HORSE** and I’m ready for **ACTION!**”

Bob pointed to four horses in front of his store.



He piled other supplies on the counter. I counted four saddles, four blankets, four canteens, four bowls, four spoons, and far too many cans of baked beans. Did I mention I have sensitive stomach?

OUR WILD WEST SURVIVAL KIT...





MY COUSIN WILL PAY!

“That’s what you need, strangers,” Bob said when he had gathered all our supplies. “Now, how will you be paying?”

Trap pointed to me. “My cousin will pay!” he squeaked.

I wasn’t surprised. Trap loves spending money... especially when it’s mine.



I pulled out some bills from my wallet. Bob eyed them with **SUSPICION**.

“Never saw bills like this,” he said. “Nope, you need gold in these parts, stranger.”

With a sigh, I gave him my **GOLD** watch.



gold watch



“Not enough, partner,” he said, pocketing the watch. “I’ll need more **GOLD**. What else do you have?”



gold tooth

Before I could think, Trap spoke up. “My cousin has a **GOLD** tooth,” he announced.

Bob took out a pair of pliers. “Open up,” he ordered.

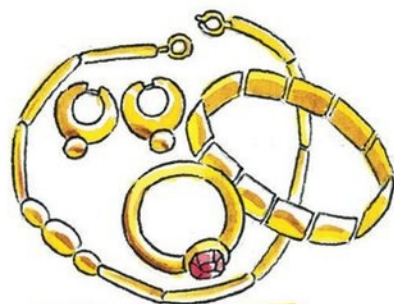
Cheese nibblets! He was going to yank out my **GOLD** tooth! I felt faint.

Just then, my sister jumped to my rescue. “Stop! Don’t touch him!” she shrieked. “I’ve got lots of **GOLD** for you.” Good old Thea.

I watched as she plunked down all of her **GOLD** jewelry on the counter.

“Not enough!” Bob declared.

At that moment, Trap mumbled something under his breath. Then he pulled

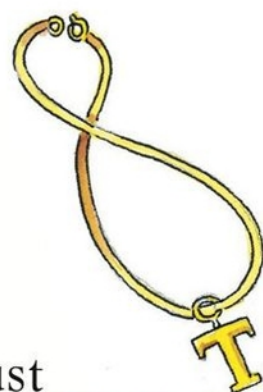


gold jewelry



out a **GOLD** chain that was hidden under his shirt. On it hung a giant shiny **GOLD** letter *T*.

We all stared at it. That *T* must have weighed a ton.



gold chain

Still Bob insisted it wasn't enough.

I was getting **ANNOYED**. What more did this mouse want from us? Our firstborn mouselings?

It was time to put my paw down. Our **GOLD** was worth at least a few scruffy-looking horses. But before I could squeak, Benjamin **PIPED UP**.

"Mr. Bob, I don't have any **GOLD**," he began. "But maybe you'd like my new Cheese Blaster 4000 game."

He pulled a small electronic video game from his backpack. Colorful pictures of Swiss slices and mozzarella balls zoomed



video game

across the screen.

Bob's eyes **LIT UP** like my grandfather Cheap Mouse Willy's when he discovers a penny on the sidewalk.

"You've got a deal!" he squeaked. "This toy is fabumouse!"

By now, it was already dusk. We gathered our supplies and took off.

We needed to find a place to spend the night. **BUT WHERE?** Where do you spend the night in the **wild, wild west?** Something told me there were no Five-star Furtown Hotels in Cactus City.





SQUEAKYTIME TEA?

Just then we spotted a sign tacked to the front of the saloon. It read:

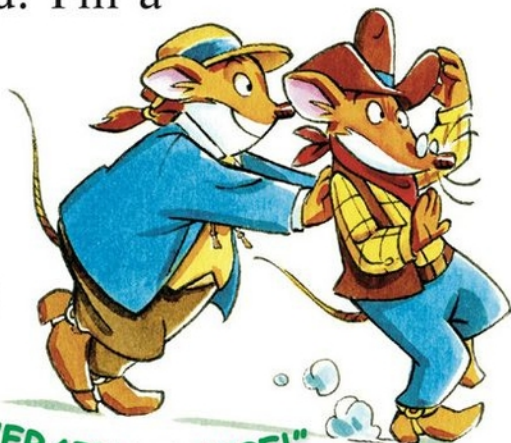
ROOMS FOR RENT!

Thea clapped her paws. “Okay, everyone. Here’s what we’re going to do,” she announced. “Gerry Berry will go into the **saloon**. He will book us two rooms for the night. The rest of us will take care of the horses.”

One thing you should know about Thea—she loves being the boss.

I stared at the noisy saloon. “Can’t you come in with me?” I asked. I’m a **little shy** in front of strangers.

Trap pushed me toward the door. “Oh, stop being



“GO ON, ‘FRAIDY MOUSE!”

THE SALOON







such a 'FRAIDY MOUSE!" he snorted. "Shake a paw!"

I frowned. "Don't *push* me! I can't stand it when you push me!" I squeaked.

I stepped into the saloon. Cowrats were everywhere. They were playing cards. They were flinging darts. They were picking their teeth with pocketknives. *Rat-munching rattlesnakes!* Those cowrats were tough!

I listened to one rodent banging away at the piano. He was awful. But I didn't dare say a word. He might use *me* to pick his teeth!

Just then a mouse *screeched* at me from behind the bar.

"What d'ya want, stranger?" he yelled. My stomach was churning. I guess it was the beans.

I decided a hot cup of **Squeakytime**



Tea would be just perfect. So I asked him for one.

His mouth hit the floor. “Did you say a hot cup of **Squeakytime**



Tea?” he repeated.



I nodded. I wondered why he looked so surprised. I know the name sounds silly, but it really is a very *soothing* tea.

He snorted and turned to the crowd. “Did ya hear what the stranger wants to drink?” he bellowed. “**Squeakytime Tea!**”

The piano player stopped playing.

Everyone turned toward me. They were quiet as mice.



Then they started laughing. “**Squeaky-time Tea? Ha-ha-haaa!!**”



The bartender slid a cup of tea down the counter toward me...but I missed.



The bartender threw
me a cup of tea...

The crowd snickered.
The bartender threw me
a second cup of tea... but
I missed again.

They all **guffawed**.

The bartender threw me
a third cup.

This time
I caught it
on the fly.



then a second cup of tea...

It was my turn to sneer.
So I did. Then I let out an
ear-piercing scream.

The **cup** was scalding
hot!



...and a third... This time
I caught it on the fly!



STRANGER, CACTUS CITY IS TOO SMALL FOR THE TWO OF US!

I blew on my paws. They felt like they were on fire.

I started hopping around in a circle screaming, “**OUCH, OUCH, OUCH!**”

Then I heard a crunch. Oops! I had accidentally stepped on someone’s paw.

I turned around. I was snout to snout with an ugly rat with **HUMONGOUS MUSCLES**. Yikes!

“S-s-s-soorry,” I stammered.

He gnashed his teeth. “You did that on purpose!”

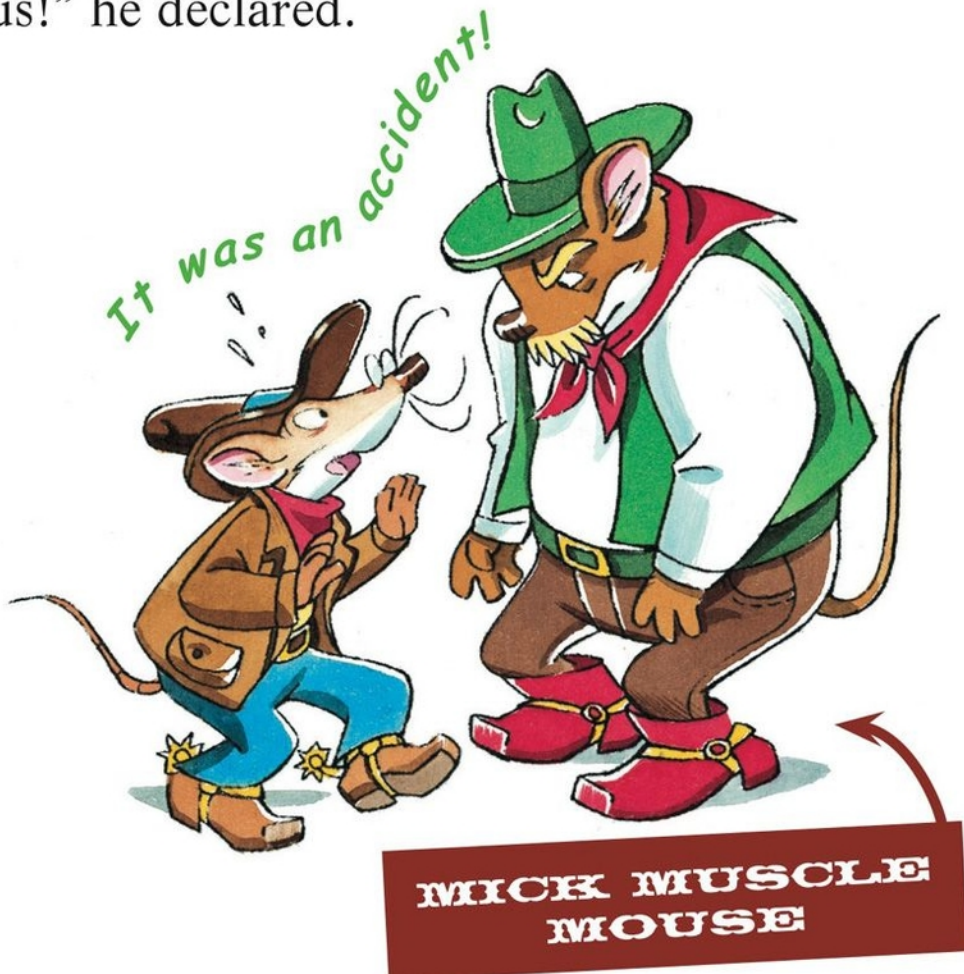




he **ROARED**. Then he spit into a **METAL BUCKET** across the room. *Ping!* Perfect shot.

I turned pale. “No, really, it was an accident,” I tried to explain.

He didn’t let me finish. “Stranger, **Cactus City** is too small for the two of us!” he declared.





I was shivering in my boots. Oh, why did I have to step on this cowrat's toes? He was bigger than a pro rat wrestler.

"Of course, I'll leave immediately," I muttered.

But the rodent held up his paw. "Too *late*, stranger," he squeaked. "No one messes with Mick Muscle Mouse and gets away with it. We need to fight it out. One of us will live, and the other will be *PUSHING UP DAISIES*."

The *UNDERTAKER* applauded. "Pushing up daisies. I like it!" He leaned out the door and yelled to the gravedigger. "Hey, Grimsly, get a *casket* ready!" he instructed. "On second thought, make that two *caskets*. We might get lucky!"

Then he looked me up and down. "So, stranger, what's your name?" he asked.



I gulped. "Well, my name is **GERONIMO**," I said.

G as in **GENTLE**.

E as in **EDUCATED**.

R as in **RESPECTFUL**.

O as in **OH, I AM**

**SO SORRY THAT I
STEPPED ON MICK
MUSCLE MOUSE'S
PAW!**

N as in **NOT DONE
ON PURPOSE**.

I as in **I AM A
POLITE MOUSE**.

M as in **MY, OH, MY,
HOW DID I EVER GET
INTO THIS MESS?**

O as in **OH, POOR,
POOR ME!**



The undertaker chiseled my name on the coffin. “Uhm, let’s see, that’s **GERONIMO**...”

G as in **GONNA PAY ME IN ADVANCE WHILE YOU’RE STILL BREATHING.**

E as in **EVERYBODY HAS TO KICK THE BUCKET SOONER OR LATER.**

R as in you **REALLY BLEW IT THIS TIME.**

O as in **OH, WHY DID YOU STOP IN CACTUS CITY?**

N as in **NO ONE LASTS LONG HERE.**

I as in **I PITY YOU....**

M as in **MAYBE YOU’LL TELL ME WHY YOU STEPPED ON THE FOOT OF MICK MUSCLE MOUSE, OF ALL RODENTS?**

O as in **OH, WELL, HOPE YOU HAD A NICE LIFE!**

Mick jumped to his paws. “Let me at him!” he shrieked. “I’ll flatten him! I’ll mash him into cottage cheese! I’ll skin him like a rat-fur rug! I’ll spread him out like cream cheese!”



YOO-HOO!



At that moment, a voice **sang out**. “Yoo-hoo! Mick Muscle Mouse!

How are you doing this morning?” it trilled.

A **pretty blonde** rodent with **bright blue** eyes stood in front of us. She was



dressed all in **pink** from her snout to her tail. In her paw she carried a **pink** umbrella.

It was Miss Dolly Dandywhiskers. She owned the **Pretty Paws Dress Shop** in town.

“Why, Miss Dolly,” Mick gushed. “You’re looking lovely today.”

Miss Dolly, the proprietress of the dress shop



It was then that I noticed Mick's fur had turned beet-red. Was he coming down with something? Rodent pox? The flu? A terrible case of sunburn? Then I realized he was beaming at Miss Dolly. I snickered. Yep, Mick Muscle Mouse was sick all right. He was **LOVESICK!**



Just then, Dolly dropped her tiny lace handkerchief on the ground.

Mick let go of my ear. He ran to pick up Dolly's handkerchief.

Dolly smiled. "Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Muscle Mouse," she gushed.

Mick grinned. I grinned, too. Not because those two were in love. But because Mick had completely forgotten about me!

I GRABBED MY TAIL AND RAN!



SAVED BY A WHISKER!

I searched all over for my family. But it was as if they had disappeared.

They were not in the **saloon**.

They were not in the **GENERAL STORE**.

They were not at the **BLACKSMITH'S**.

They were not at the **doctor's**.

They were not at the **printer's**.

And they were not at the **school**. Although that last one didn't surprise me. My cousin Trap never did well in school. His best subject was lunch. Two grilled cheese sandwiches + two cheddar pies = one happy Trap.

Just then I heard someone shouting. It was my cousin. He was at the **RAILROAD STATION**.



Then I heard another voice.

I **gulped**. It was Mick Muscle Mouse!

The two were **arguing**. It seemed that both wanted to use the same watering trough for their horses.

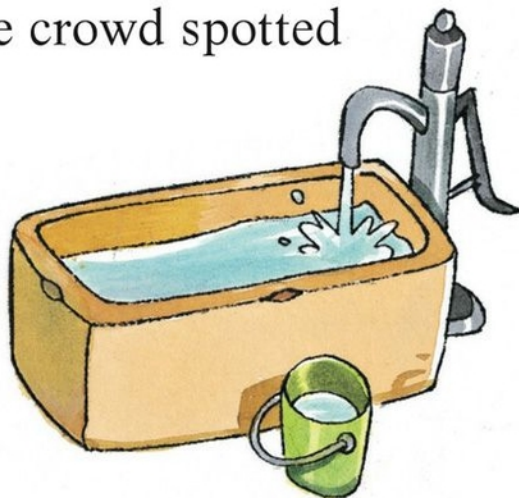
Trap's voice was loud and shrill. "You think you're so smart!" he shrieked. "Just wait till my **cousin** gets here! He'll teach you a thing or two. He's got more brains than a whole library!"

Mick spat on the ground. "Oh, yeah?" he thundered. "Who's your **cousin**?"

I tried pretending I was a statue. It didn't work. A plump rodent in the crowd spotted me.

"There he is, Mick! The one with the glasses!" he pointed out.

Trap pushed me







forward. I nearly fell flat on my snout.

“Don’t push me! I can’t stand it when you push me!” I complained.

Mick Muscle Mouse **GLARED** at me. “You again?” he yelled.

The next thing I knew, I was flying through the air. Mick had just hurled me into the sky. I landed with a loud splash in the watering trough. The horses looked **ANNOYED**.

The **undertaker**, on the other paw, looked thrilled. He jumped up and down and clapped his paws. “Grimsly, let’s finish that wooden coffin for the stranger!” he cried. “Something tells me he may need one soon!”

Grimsly snickered and raced away.

Right at that moment, a *skinny* old lady with a flower in her hat came by. She reminded me of my great-aunt **No Nonsense**. She was one strict rodent.



A coffin the perfect size for Geronimo!



“Mick Muscle Mouse!” I heard the old lady yell. “What are you **doing?**”

Mick looked at the ground. “N-n-nothing, *Teacher,*” he stuttered.

She waved her cane in the air. “Very good, Mick,” she squeaked. “Because I’m keeping my eye on you. And you’d better **behave!** Just because you’re not in **school** anymore doesn’t mean you can disobey the **rules!**”

Mick shuffled his paws. “Oh, of course, *Miss Firm Fur,*” he mumbled.

As soon as she left, Mick looked for me. But as my cousin said, I’m one smart mouse. I had already hightailed it out of there.



*Miss Firm Fur
the Teacher*



NO GUNS FOR GERONIMO STILTON

We returned to the saloon. Our rooms were on the first floor. The beds were full of fleas. The walls were stained and peeling. The floor had mounds of **dust**. And the smell was enough to drive a mouse to drink rat poison!



Fleas



Stains

Trap pinched his nose. “Germeister, is that you? You should stay away from those **beans**!” he smirked.



Mounds of Dust

I sighed. Oh, why did I get stuck with such an **OBNOXIOUS** cousin? He was so annoying. He was so **immature**. He was so . . . clumsy.

I watched in horror as Trap threw open the shutters, knocking over a huge vase of flowers.



You could hit somebody!



It crashed down onto the street.

“Be **CAREEEEEEEEFUL**! You could hit somebody!” I shrieked.

I scrambled to the window. **Cheese niblets!** The vase *had* hit somebody. Mick Muscle Mouse stood under the window holding a flower. I could see a huge bump forming on his head.

“You again!” he roared. “Stranger, tonight I’m going to **finish** you off! I’m gonna send you packing! You’ll be headed for the great big cheese deli in the sky!”

In a flash, the **undertaker** appeared next to him. “Big cheese deli in the sky?” he squeaked, rubbing his paws together.

I ran down to the **saloon**. I had to straighten things out between Mick and me. After all, I never meant to **upset** anyone.

Unfortunately, Mick was another story. He





loved hurting mice. And he was proud of it.

“Stranger! Tonight there’ll be one less rodent in Cactus City! Get ready for a shoot-out!” he yelled.

My teeth began to chatter. “I will certainly n-n-n-not get r-r-r-ready f-f-f-for a shootout,” I stammered. **“GERONIMO STILTON DOES NOT SHOOT G-G-G-GUNS.”**

Mick rolled his eyes. “This stranger is a ‘fraidy mouse!” he cried.

Everyone in the saloon stared at me. **“FRAIDY MOUSE! FRAIDY MOUSE!”** they chanted.

Squeaks of laughter filled my ears.

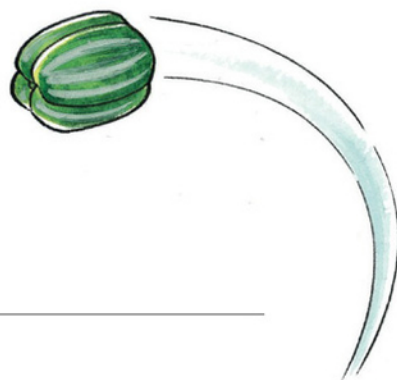




I DID NOT DO IT ON PURPOSE!

Before I could decide what to do next...

- 1** I slipped on a potato peel.
- 2** I somersaulted into the air.
- 3** I accidentally kicked Mick in the snout.
- 4** I grabbed the chandelier.
- 5** I swung onto the balcony.
- 6** I slid down the banister.
- 7** I accidentally head-butted Mick.
- 8** I fell back on a loose board.
- 9** I knocked a watermelon into the air.
- 10** I watched the watermelon land on Mick's head.
- 11** "I did not do it on purpose!"
I apologized to Mick.





1. I slipped on a potato peel.



2. I somersaulted into the air.



3. I accidentally kicked Mick in the snout.



4. I grabbed the chandelier.



5. I swung onto the balcony.



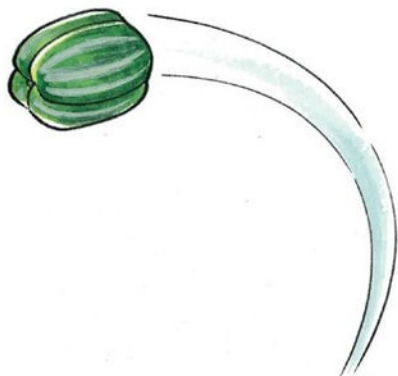
6. I slid down the banister.



7. I accidentally head-butted Mick.



8. I fell back on a loose board.



9. I knocked a watermelon into the air.



10. I watched the watermelon land on Mick's head.



11. "I did not do it on purpose!"



The crowd in the saloon stared at me with respect. “What a mouse! What a fighter! **WHAT A DAREDEVIL!**”

“But I did not do it on purpose! I am not a fighter! I’m not strong!” I protested.

Miss Firm Fur the teacher felt my **MUSCLES**. “Young mouse, I would not have bet a penny on you. I thought Mick would make Swiss cheese out of you,” she commented. “But you are strong.”

Miss Dolly batted her eyelashes. “Oooh, Mr. Geronimo,” she squeaked in a soft voice. “You are much stronger than Mr. Muscle Mouse. Much, much stronger!”



I could tell Mick felt awful. He looked as if he were going to **cry**.

The **undertaker** shook his head. “Too bad they didn’t fight it out,” he sighed. “No **coffins** needed here, I guess.”

At that moment the earth **trembled**.
A cloud of dust rolled into town. A group of gun-toting mice galloped behind it.

Someone in the crowd whispered, “The **evil gunmice** are coming!”

I looked around me. Everyone looked terrified. The doctor, the blacksmith, the teacher, the banker. Yes, even Mick Muscle Mouse looked afraid.





I AM THE STRONGEST!

The gunmice stopped in the center of town. They were pulling a wagon. Inside the wagon sat an **ENORMOUSE** barrel.

I wondered what was inside it. But there was no time to think about it. I was too busy thinking about the leader of the gunmice.



Wicked Whiskers

He was the scariest rodent I had ever seen! He was dressed all in **black** from his leather pants to his **coal-black** hat. His **black** cowrat boots were **EXTRA POINTY**. They looked



like they could spear a rodent with one hard paw-kick. His face seemed to be stuck in a permanent scowl. I **shivered**. Who was this evil gummouse, and what was he doing in **Cactus City**?

Just then I noticed something shiny pinned to his shirt pocket. Rat-munching rattlesnakes! It was a sheriff's star! How could this **EVIL-LOOKING** gunmouse be a sheriff?

A crowd gathered around him.

"Citizens of Cactus City!" the evil-looking gunmouse shouted. "From now on, you will cheer when I enter town. I want **singing**. I want **dancing**. And I want a plate of nachos





with heaping gobs of cheddar!”

Rodents rushed to obey his orders. One led a chorus of “Long Live the Sheriff!” Another started teaching a new line dance. A third produced a plate of steaming nachos.

The sheriff shoved some chips into his mouth. “Too hot, you fool!” he hissed.

Everyone stopped cheering. They stopped singing. They stopped dancing.

They were too scared to squeak.





WHO WILL VOLUNTEER?

Then a voice rose up from the crowd. It was the old lady teacher, *Miss Firm Fur*.

“Citizens of **Cactus City**, you should be ashamed of yourselves!” she cried, waving her cane in the air. “This gunmouse is just a big old bully. Who will stand up to him? I need a strong **VOLUNTEER** to step forward.”

Suddenly, someone pushed me from behind.

I should have known. It was my **cousin** Trap.

“Don’t push me! I can’t stand it when you push me!” I screeched.



Meanwhile, the teacher watched me with an approving eye. “Well done, stranger! I knew you were **COURAGEOUS**. You are strong! Yes, you are very strong!” she said.

The crowd repeated, “The stranger is strong! He is very strong!”

I TURNED PALE. “But I am not strong, and I am not **COURAGEOUS**, either,” I tried to explain.

No one was listening.

Go, cousin!





“Come on, ’fraidy mouse, don’t embarrass the Stilton family!” Thea ordered.

I felt **faint**. I thought family was supposed to stick by you. But my family was trying to get me killed!

The gunmouse approached me. He took off his sunglasses and stuck his face close to mine. His **eyes** were as **GREEN** as a **KILLER COBRA’S**.



My head began to pound. Oh, how did I get myself into such a mess?

“What’s your name, stranger?” the gunmouse asked.

I told him. It wasn’t easy. My teeth were chattering so hard, I felt like I was squeaking another language.

“My name is **WICKED WHISKERS**,” the gunmouse snarled. “And I’m going to





make you sorry you ever came to Cactus City!”

I gulped. I was already sorry. I was so sorry, I wanted to break into **sobs** like a baby mouselet. But how could I? The citizens of Cactus City were counting on me.

“I challenge you to a **ROBBO** match at my ranch. Whoever can ride and tame Bessie wins!” the gunmouse declared. “If you win, I’ll leave **Cactus City** forever.”

I looked **around** me. The rodents of Cactus City were staring at me, worried. I was their last hope. I had no choice.

I accepted the challenge. After all, I told myself, how bad could an animal named Bessie be?



TOGETHER WE CAN DO ANYTHING!

Wicked Whiskers held his paw in the air. The **evil** **gunniece** jumped back onto their horses. “See you at the **RANCH!**” Wicked sneered at me. Then he left at a gallop.

I was **scared**. I didn’t know anything about **RODGEOS**. I am a city mouse. The last time I rode a horse was on the mousey-go-round at the Blue Cheese County Carnival. I was dizzy for a week afterward.

I hung my head.

Just then, someone tapped my shoulder. It was Mick Muscle Mouse. “Don’t worry, stranger. I’ll help you,” he said. “Your courage is contagious!”

All the citizens of **Cactus City** clapped.



“Your courage is contagious!” they cheered.

I *smiled*. I didn’t tell anyone I really was a ‘fraidy mouse. I needed all the help I could get.

“*Don’t forget us*, Gerry Berry!”
Thea called. Trap and Benjamin nodded.

“Together we can do anything!” they *shouted*.

I was feeling a lot *better*. I was happy my family was behind me. They really can be great when they want to be. Now if I could just get my sister to stop calling me Gerry Berry....

Your courage is contagious!



HOW THE WEST WAS WON

In 1776, the original thirteen English colonies of North America declared their independence and formed the United States of America. From that moment began the expansion toward the western territories, which were inhabited by Native Americans.

In 1842, the first official trail crossing the Native American territories was established. It was called the Oregon Trail.

In 1862, the U.S. government encouraged settling in the west by enacting a law called the Homestead Act. The Homestead Act provided 160 acres of land to anyone who



wanted to farm, build a house, and live out West for at least five years. Thousands of people migrated to the western territories.

Who were these pioneers who decided to go and conquer the Wild West? They were people of every age, from every walk of life. Whole families left their homes in the East in search of a new life and land to settle.

To cross the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, the pioneers traveled for months and months on wagons pulled by oxen, mules, or horses. The trip for these courageous people was hard, but their hearts were filled with enthusiasm and hope....





WICKED WHISKERS'S WATER DAM

Before I went to the evil gunmouse's ranch, I needed to know more about him. Mick told me the whole sad story.

It seemed WICKED WHISKERS was the owner of a piece of land north of Cactus City. A RIVER ran through the land. For years, the river ran straight to Cactus City and was used for farming, cattle, and the citizens of the town. Then Wicked decided he wanted to control Cactus City. He built a dam so the water no longer reached the city. Fields got dry. Cattle got thirsty.

"Now we have to pay Wicked to deliver water to us," Mick explained with a sigh. "He makes us pay for the water in gold."

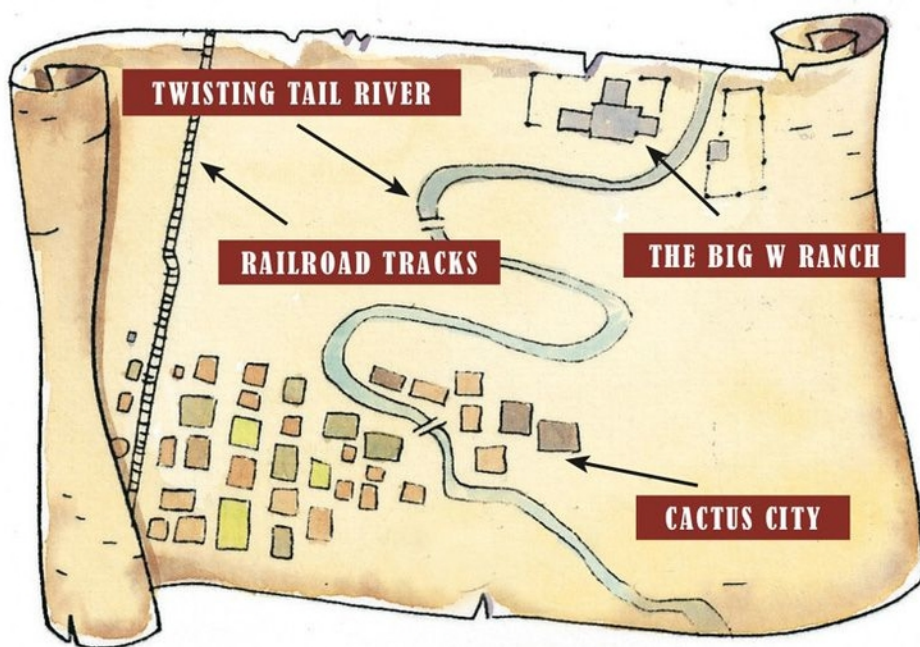


I was **disgusted**. What kind of mouse would steal water from needy rodents? It was sneaky. It was cruel. It was enough to make me ready to **take on** Wicked Whiskers.

Mick showed me a **MAP**. “We’ll need *three days* and *three nights* to reach the Big W, Wicked Whiskers’s ranch,” he said.

Thea, Trap, and Benjamin were excited.

“This is going to be fabumouse!” Thea cheered.





“We’ll be like real cowrats!” Trap grinned.

“I love horses!” Benjamin squeaked.

I felt *limp*. I couldn’t ride a horse for *three days*. I didn’t even know how.

Before I could protest, Mick threw me on a horse. It took off at a *gallop*.

I hung on for dear life. One minute, I was hanging upside down from the saddle. The next minute, I was facing the horse’s tail.

The crowd watched me go.

“Look at the stranger! He’s a regular gymnast!” I heard one mouse *cry*.

“I’ve never seen anything like it!” another added.

“He’s better than a circus acrobat!” someone else squeaked.

I tried not to sob hysterically. I didn’t want to upset the good rodents of **Cactus City**.

1

Walking...



2

trotting...



3

galloping...



4

any old way...



5

eyes closed...



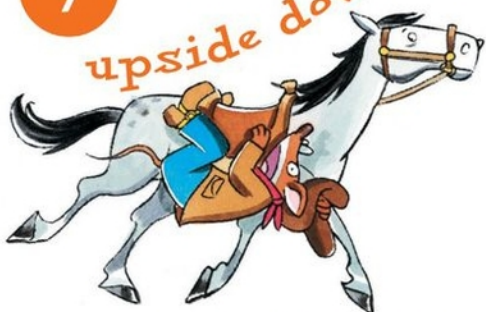
6

standing...



7

upside down...



8

in reverse!

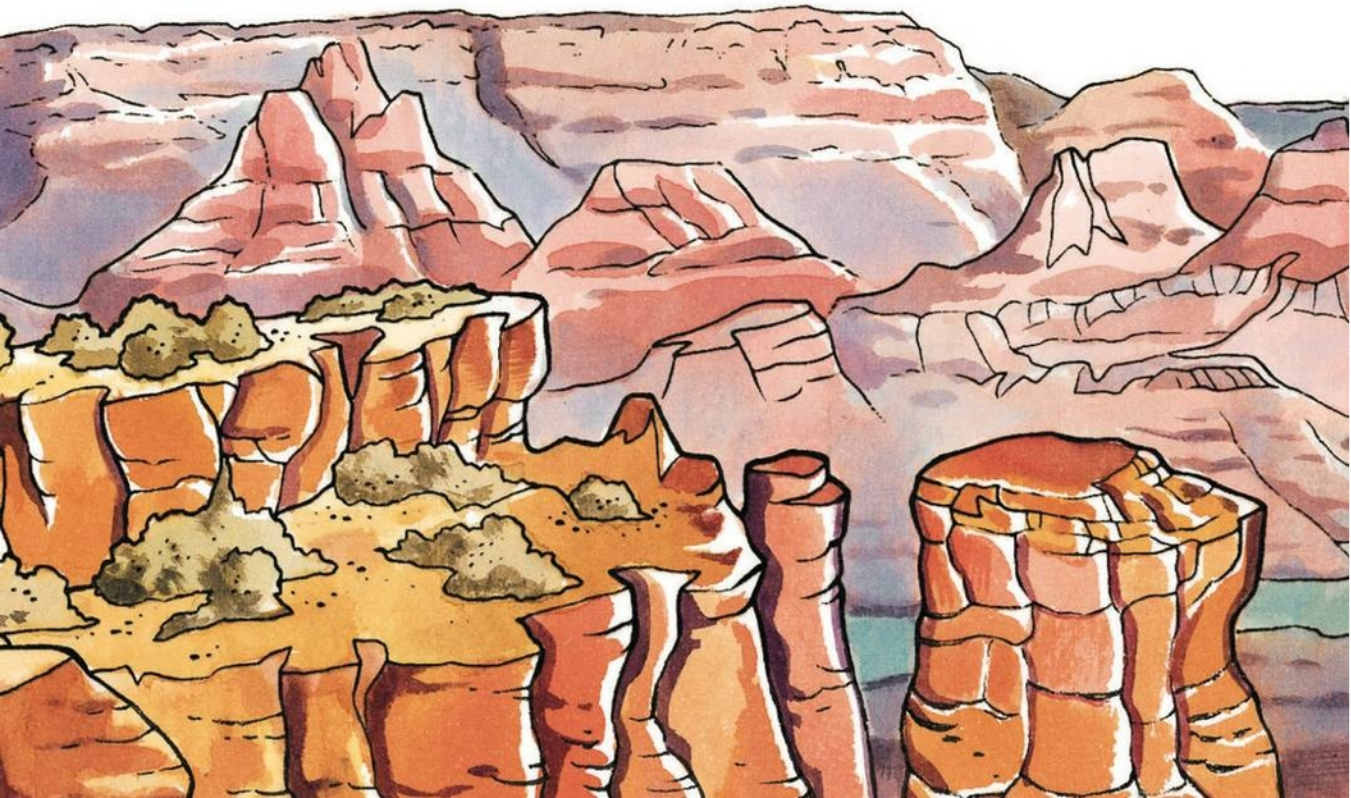




STREAMS, SNAKES, AND SCORPIONS

We galloped for hours and hours under the *sun*.

We passed by the **GRAND CANYON**.
I stopped at the edge and looked below.
Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon?
It is unbelievable! I had always thought

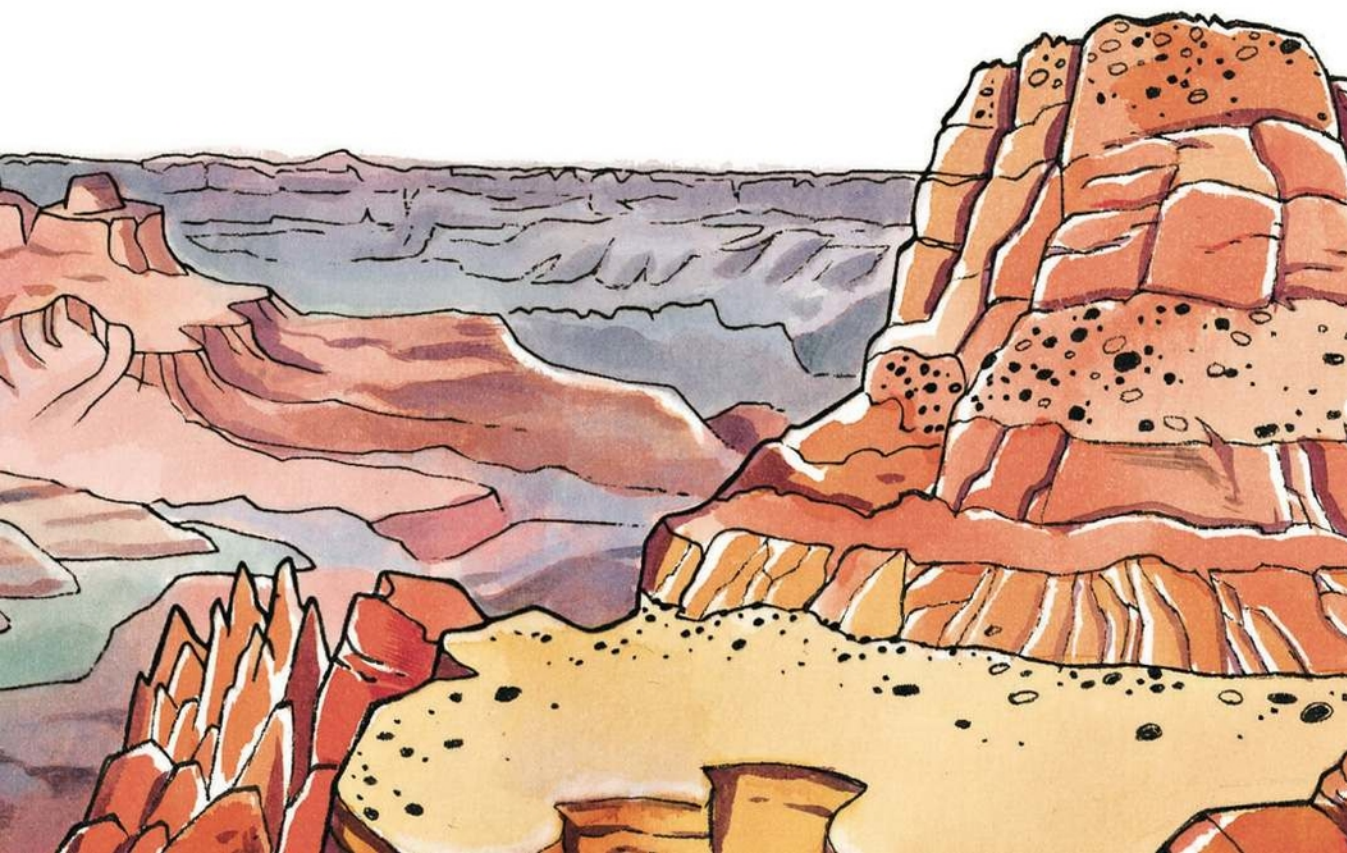




The GRAND CANYON is located in Arizona. It is a series of gorges carved by the Colorado River flowing through it for thousands and thousands of years. It is 6,000 feet deep, 220 miles long, and from 3 to 18 miles wide.

the canyon was formed by **VERY HIGH** mountains, but it is not.

It grew **COLD** as night fell. I couldn't stop shivering.



**HERE'S WHAT
HAPPENED
TO ME...**

My teeth started chattering...



my tail started aching...



I stubbed my paw on a rock...



I couldn't light the fire...



I fell in a stream...



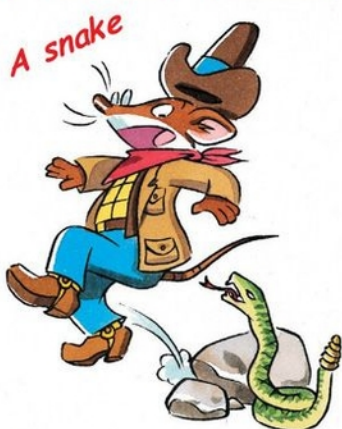
I ate too many beans...



my stomach got upset...



a snake almost bit me...



I sat on a cactus...



a scorpion attacked me!



Cheese niblets!





We decided to *rest*.

We finally sat around the **FIRE**. Trap played on the banjo. Mick played the harmonica. Then we all sang “Oh! Susannah.” I have to admit, it was a *lot of fun!*



BLACK BEAN SOUP

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 POUND OF DRY BLACK BEANS | 1 BOUILLON CUBE FOR BROTH |
| 2 STALKS OF CELERY, CHOPPED | 7 OUNCES CRUSHED TOMATOES |
| 2 GARLIC CLOVES, CHOPPED | MIXED DRIED SPICES (CUMIN, HOT |
| 1 ONION, CHOPPED | PEPPERS, CORIANDER TO TASTE) |
| 1 TEASPOON BLACK PEPPERCORNS | SALT (TO TASTE) |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash the beans under running water and put them in a large soup pot. Cover them with cold water, and then ask an adult to put them on the stove and turn on the heat.
2. When the water begins to boil, cook the beans for 2 minutes, turn off the heat, and let the beans rest for 1 hour in their liquid. (Do not stir the beans.)
3. Ask an adult to turn on the heat again and add the chopped celery, garlic, onion, and dried spices (to taste) to the pot. Add the teaspoon of peppercorns and the bouillon cube for the soup.
4. Simmer for about 3 hours. Then add the chopped tomatoes and salt to taste.
5. (Optional) Ask an adult to puree one third of the beans in a blender, return them to the pot, and reheat the mixture. This will make the soup thicker.



OH, SUSANNAH!

I come from Alabama
With my banjo on my knee,
I'm going to Louisiana,
My true love for to see.

It rained all night
The day I left,
The weather it was dry,
The sun so hot,
I froze to death,
Susannah, don't you cry.

Oh! Susannah,
Don't you cry for me
For I come from Alabama
With my banjo on my knee.





A REAL COWRAT

That night I fell asleep next to my friends. I was wrapped in a **WARM** blanket with my head resting on my saddle. Before I drifted off, I gazed up into the sky. Thousands and thousands of **stars** kept watch over me.

It was an amazing sight.

In the morning, I nibbled on a tasty breakfast—a stack of yummy cheddar pancakes, bacon, an egg, and two slices of American cheese toast. It was **whisker-licking** good!



I was feeling great. I always do when my belly is full of cheese. Plus, I was getting used to being on a horse. Mick taught me how to use a lasso. He



explained why a horse needs shoes, when to brush it, and how to **FEED** it.

I galloped across the plains with the wind whipping through my whiskers.

Cheesecake, I was having fun!

The wind whipped through my





I felt like a real **COWRAT**.

Yes, I, Geronimo "Scaredy Mouse" Stilton,
was beginning to really like the **WILD,**
WILD WEST!

whiskers....I was having fun!





EVERYTHING ON HORSES!

Most horses today live in stables and are used to a tame way of living. It is their nature to live in freedom, but most would find it difficult to readjust to the wild life of the old West.

Horses live in stalls spacious enough to allow them to move and to rest. The stalls are dry and well ventilated, and the floor should be covered with straw for the horses to rest on.

Horses need to eat several meals a day. Their food should be placed inside their stalls, near their water. Besides hay and fresh grass, a horse's diet consists of oats, apples, and carrots.

Horses are very clean animals. They like to be curried (brushed) once a day. This is good for their coats because it removes loose hair and dirt.

A horse gets new shoes every thirty-five to forty days. A horse's hooves are thick but need to be protected by metal shoes. A person who shoes horses is called a blacksmith or a farrier. The farrier removes the old shoes, then cuts and files the hooves and attaches a new pair of shoes.





A NIGHTMARE NAMED . . . BESSIE!

We finally arrived at Wicked Whiskers's ranch. It was dark and spooky-looking. The whole place made **MY FUR CRAWL**.

Just then Wicked sauntered up. "Are you ready to lose, stranger? Are you ready to face *Bessie*?" he cackled.

I tried to look **tough**, but inside I felt like a bowl of cream cheese and jelly.

"N-n-no p-p-p-problem," I stammered. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. How bad could an animal named Bessie be?

Then I saw him. *Bessie*, I mean. He was an **immense** black beast the size of two double-decker cheese delivery trucks. He had **terrifying** red eyes that looked



like they were on fire. His horns were as **LONG** as my tail.

My eyes nearly popped out of my fur. No, Bessie wasn't dangerous. He was deadly!

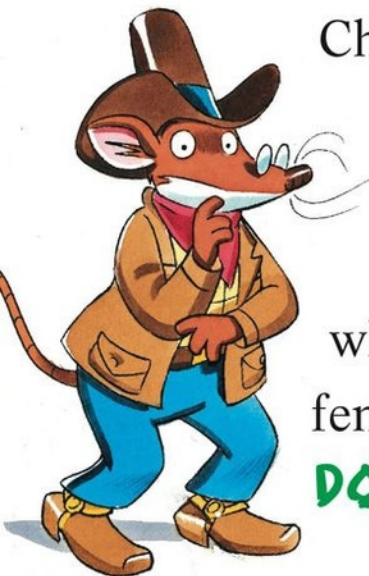
"W-w-what is that?" I croaked.

Trap snorted. "Wake up and smell the cheese, Germeister," he scoffed. "It's a **bull**, of course. Look at those horns! One poke and you'll run squeaking for your life!"

I felt **faint**. No wonder Wicked Whiskers knew he would **win** the challenge. I'd never be able to ride Bessie. Not for all the Cheesy Chews in the world!

"Go, cousin, move your tail!" Trap ordered. Then he **PUSHED** me.

"Don't push me! I can't stand it when you push me!" I grabbed the fence. "I changed my mind. **I CAN'T DO THIS!**" I squeaked.





Thea rolled her eyes. “Oh, don’t be such a crybaby mouse,” she *groaned*.

So much for her support, I steamed.

A *little paw* grabbed mine. “Uncle Geronimo, you can do it. I have faith in you!” little Benjamin whispered.

Of course, that’s all it took. How could I let my dear sweet nephew down? I could hear Bessie snorting in his pen. *He’s not angry*, I told myself. *He’s just got a bad cold*.

With *shaky paws*, I climbed onto his back.

The door of the pen opened.

Bessie took off like a shot!

“Good-bye, Stiltons! Good-bye, Mick! Good-bye, rodents everywhere!” I sobbed.



**Bessie
the bull**



WHY, WHY, WHY?

I tried to hold on to Bessie, but he was too strong for me. In a flash, he'd thrown me to the ground.

“**Help!**” I squeaked as Bessie tried to trample me. I was able to **GET AWAY**, but he was right **ON MY TAIL**. His **HORNS** hooked my shirt. He tossed me into the air. I bounced off the fence. Then I landed back on Bessie.

Suddenly, I spotted my little nephew Benjamin. He was **WAVING HIS PAW** frantically. What was he trying to tell me?

Benjamin started yelling something. It sounded like **HORN**. Or was that *corn*?

Next, my nephew began pointing at his **EAR**. Did he have an **EARACHE**? I love my

1



I JUMPED ON THE BULL...

2



HE THREW ME OFF...

3



HE ALMOST TRAMPLED ME...

4



HE CHASED AFTER ME...

6



I FLEW THROUGH THE AIR...

5



HE BUTTED ME WITH HIS HORNS

7



I BOUNCED OFF THE FENCE...

8



I LANDED BACK ON BESSIE!



HE WAS YELLING *HORN*...



OR WAS IT *CORN*?



HE POINTED AT HIS EAR.

nephew, but I couldn't worry about his ears right now.

Just then I glanced down at Bessie's massive neck. That's when I noticed his ear. A huge **cactus** thorn was stuck on it. Holey cheese! So that's what my nephew was trying to tell me. The **THORN** was making Bessie hopping mad. As I tumbled off his back, I plucked the thorn from his ear.

Bessie stopped snorting. He stopped kicking. He stopped moving. He **laid**



his head on my shoulder.
And then he smiled.
I patted his head and
jumped on his back. I
couldn't believe it. I,
Geronimo Stilton, had
tamed **Bessie**!

Benjamin **ran** toward
me.

"You saved my life,
nephew!" I squeaked.
I pulled him up onto
Bessie's back. We
took a victory lap
around the ranch.

The rodents of Cactus
City arrived. They
CLAPPED and
CHEERED us on.

9



I PLUCKED THE THORN...

10



I PATTED HIS HEAD...

11



...WE RODE BESSIE!



STRONG RODENTS KNOW HOW TO FORGIVE!

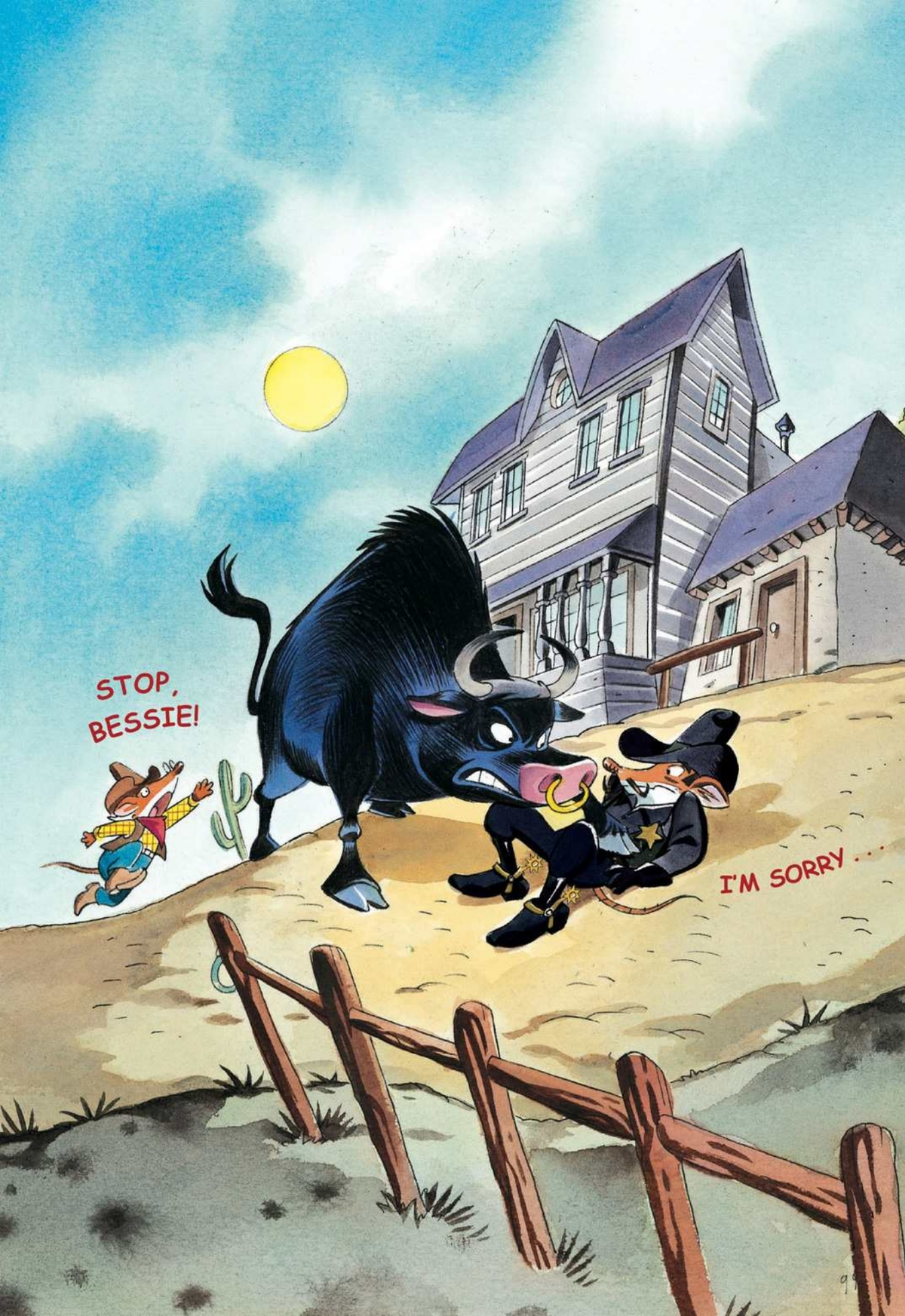
Meanwhile, Wicked Whiskers was **furious**. He couldn't understand why Bessie wasn't **MAD** anymore.

“Why didn't you make **cream cheese** out of the stranger?” he screamed at the bull. “My grandma Wimpy Whiskers is tougher than you!”

Bessie **stamped** his hoof. With a snort, he tossed Wicked Whiskers into the air.

The gunmouse fell to the ground. The bull put his hoof on Whiskers's tummy.

Wicked Whiskers's teeth were **CHATTERING**. His tail was twitching. “D-d-d-don't hurt m-m-m-me!”



STOP,
BESSIE!

I'M SORRY...



the gunmouse stammered.

I knelt down next to Wicked Whiskers. The crowd gathered around.

“I think you owe the citizens of Cactus City an **apology**,” I said. “You need to give them back their water. You need to stop being a bully.”

The gunmouse nodded his head.

“You are right, stranger,” he whispered. “I’m sorry for what I’ve done.”

But the crowd wasn’t convinced.

“Let’s make him pay for it!” a mouse screeched.

“Let’s get even!” another shouted.

I knew I had to do something quick. “Violence is not the answer,” I told the





citizens of **Cactus City**. “Strong rodents know how to forgive. You need to show Wicked Whiskers you are stronger than he is. *You need to let him go.*”

The crowd stopped yelling. They looked embarrassed.

I patted the bull’s head. Then I told him to take his hoof off Wicked Whiskers. He did.

Wicked let out a sigh of relief. “Thanks, stranger,” he grinned. “You really are a **strong** cowrat!”

He took off his sheriff’s **star**. Then he jumped on his horse. His gunmice followed. They galloped off, leaving behind a cloud of **dust**.





YIPPEE!

After the gunmice left, we went to the Twisting Tail River. We found the dam that kept the water from reaching **Cactus City**. It had a handle that locked.

“Geronimo, you unlock that thing,” Thea ordered. “Then, Mick, you pull it out. OK, let’s go! Go! Go!”

Minutes later, the dam was open. Water flowed out with a loud **WHOOSH**.

“**Yippee!**” we shouted.

Thea and Trap did a dance. Benjamin clapped his paws. And Mick let out a happy whistle.

As for me, I pulled out a tin cup from my supplies. I knelt down and scooped up some water from the river. I don’t know about everyone else, but I was dying of **thirst!**

The dam was open!





A TIN STAR IN SEARCH OF A SHERIFF

Back in Cactus City, the judge held a meeting.

“This tin star is in search of a sheriff,” he announced. “We need a **STRONG** cowrat to defend our *rights*.”

The rodents of Cactus City nodded.

Just then a *schoolmouse* ran over to me.

“The stranger is a strong cowrat,” he said.

“HE COULD BE OUR NEW SHERIFF.”

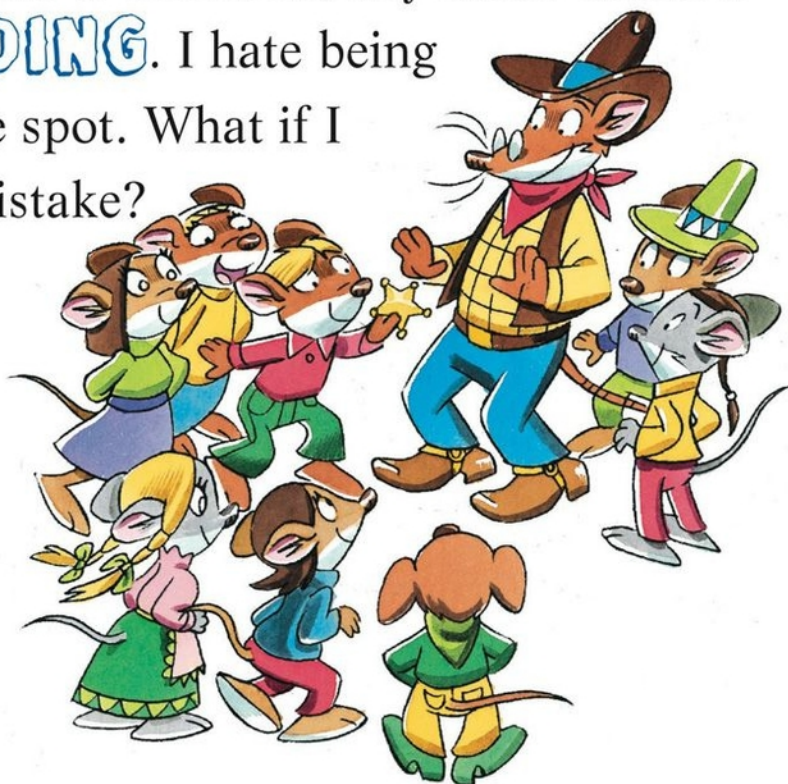
He placed the tin star in my paw.



I thanked him. I was **HONORED**. But I knew that I couldn't stay in Cactus City. After all, I had a newspaper to run back home. And what about my subscription to the Cheese-of-the-Month Club? I couldn't let all that good food go to **waste**.


"Why don't you choose our new sheriff," the judge suggested.

I looked around at the crowd. Everyone was quiet. They were waiting. Waiting for me to make a decision. My head started **POUNDING**. I hate being put on the spot. What if I made a mistake?





What if everyone laughed at me? What if I had permanent hat head when I left **Cactus City**? But that was another story. There wasn't time to worry about it now.

At that moment, I spotted Mick Muscle Mouse. I grinned. Mick was the perfect mouse for the job. He  was strong. He was brave. He knew right from wrong.

YOU ARE THE PERFECT SHERIFF!





I **THREW** the **star** to Mick. He caught it in midair.

“You are the perfect **SHERIFF** for this city, friend,” I said.

Tears **SPRANG** to Mick’s eyes. Anyone could see he was a big mouse with **A BIG HEART**. “I’ll do my best to earn your **RESPECT**,” Mick said to the crowd.

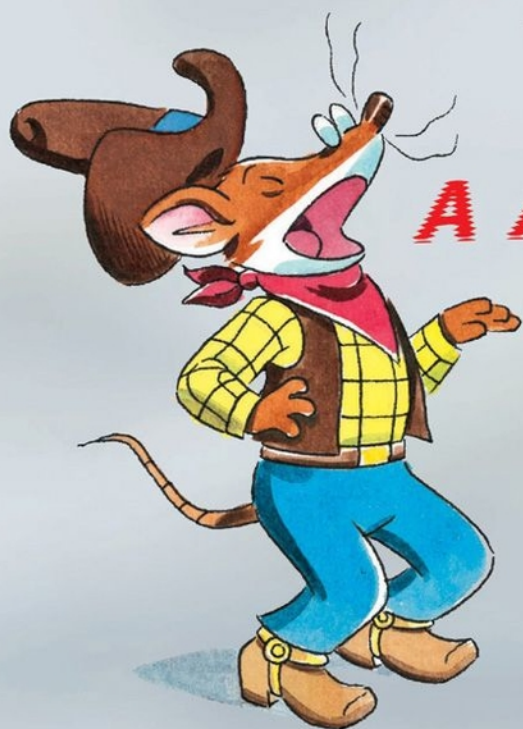
Everyone cheered.





Suddenly, a swirling cloud of **dust** enveloped me. My head started spinning. My heart started racing. What was happening? I felt like I was flying, but I wasn't sitting in a cozy seat watching a movie. I wasn't even on an airplane!

I LET OUT A SCREAM
...WHEE





WHERE AM I?

I woke up startled.

“Where am I?” I mumbled.

I looked around.

I was in my room.

In my home.

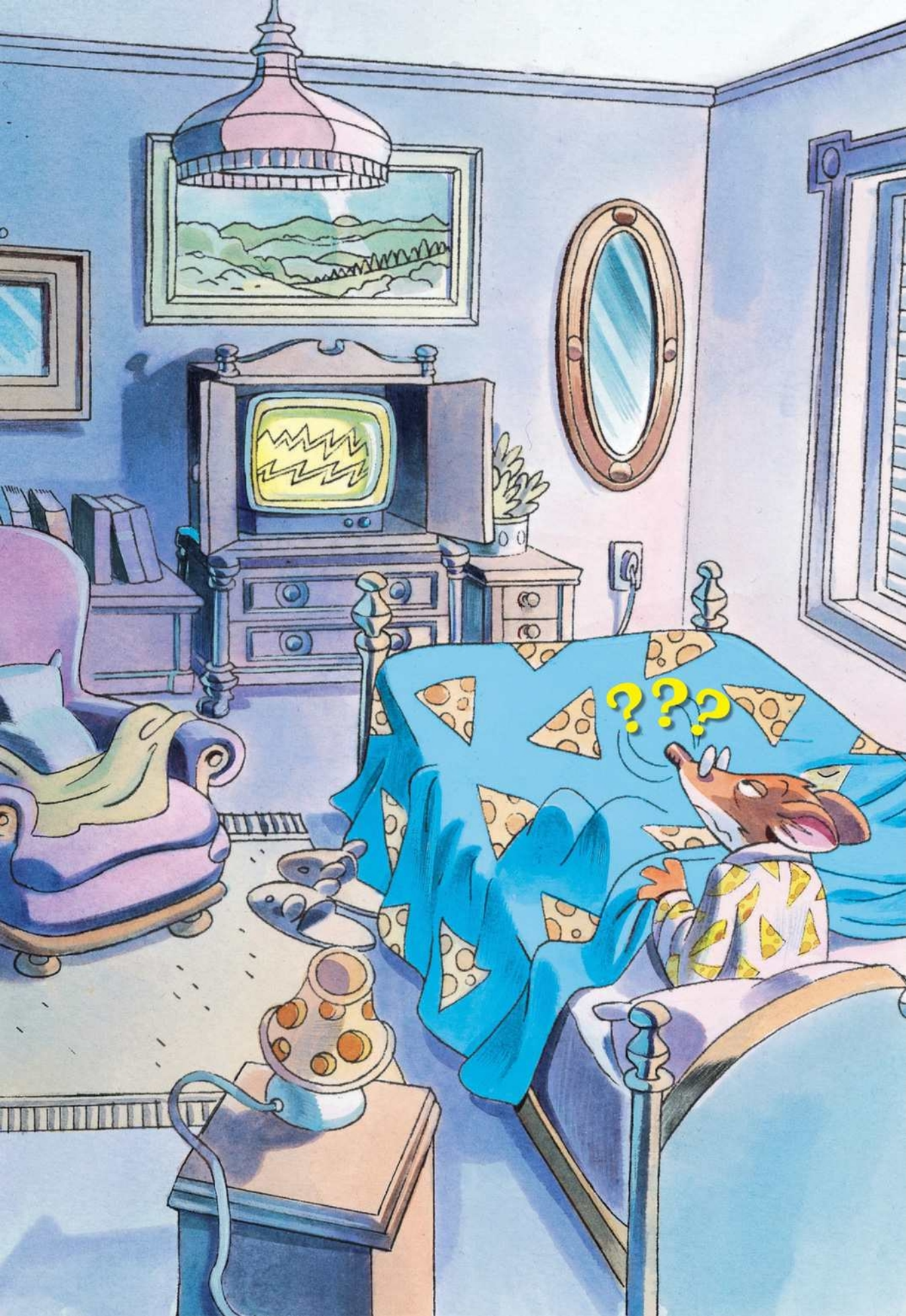
In New Mouse City!

No, I was not in the Wild West
after all. It was only a **dream**.

I heard a droning sound.

The TV was **ON**.

Then I remembered something. I had
been watching television before I fell
asleep. I was watching an adventure story
about the **WILD, WILD
WEST!**





“OH! SUSANNAH”

I looked for a pail...



I shuffled to the bathroom.
I looked for a pail so I could
wash my face.

Then I remembered...I
wasn't in the Wild West.

I went down to the
kitchen for **breakfast**.
I looked for a can of beans
to eat.

Then I remembered...I
wasn't in the Wild West.

I went outside. I looked
for my horse to ride to
work.

Then I remembered...I

I looked for beans...





wasn’t in the Wild West anymore.

At last I realized what was happening.

I WAS MISSING THE WILD WEST. I wanted to go back—for real.

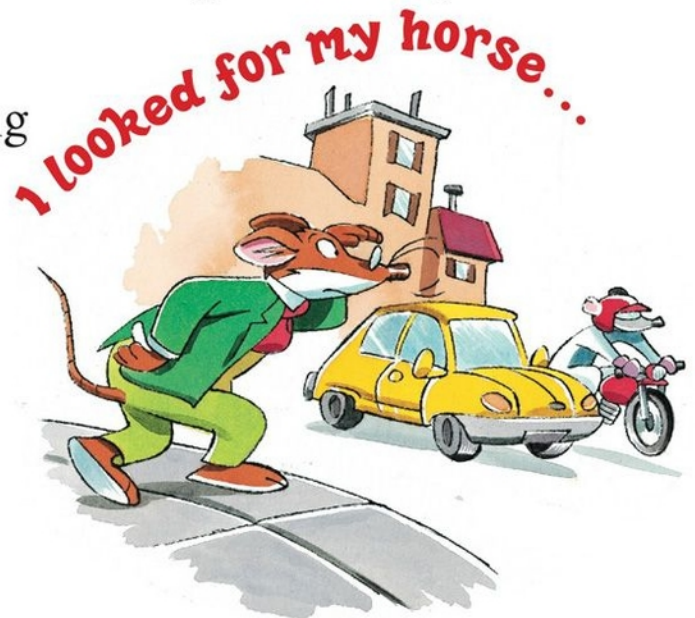
I took a taxi to the office. I hummed “Oh! Susannah” as we zoomed along. It seemed as if there were a thousand cars on the street. Rodents beeped. Brakes screeched. What a rat race! I needed a break.

That’s when I got an idea. No, not just any idea. A great, perfect, fabumouse idea!

I raced up the stairs of *The Rodent’s Gazette*. I called Thea, Trap, and Benjamin into my office.

“I feel like taking a **TRIP**,” I announced.

“Who wants to go with me





to the **WILD, WILD WEST?**”

Of course, everyone wanted to go. My family loves to travel. And they love adventure.

Trap pushed me toward the door. “Good for you, Germeister!” he chuckled. “It’s about time you stopped being a *scaredy* mouse. You’re gonna love the **WILD, WILD WEST!**”

I rolled my eyes. But then I smiled. I had to admit; for once, I knew my cousin was right.

Now if I could just get him to stop calling me Germeister...

Let's go to the Wild, Wild West!





THE ABC'S OF THE WILD WEST

BRIDLE: a horse's headgear, which carries the bit and reins that the rider uses to guide the horse.

BUNKHOUSE: a very simple wooden building where the ranch hands slept.

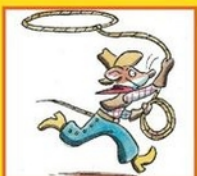
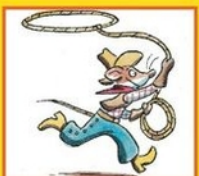
CANTER: a horse's three-beat gait that resembles a gallop but is smoother and slower.

CORRAL: an enclosure or pen where livestock is kept. Corral is also what the settlers called the circle of wagons formed by wagon trains when they stopped to rest during a long trip.

COWBOY: a cattle ranch hand who tends the livestock from horseback. Cowboys were experts in driving a herd along trails that stretched for miles among the western United States.

GAIT: the sequence of footsteps a horse takes when it moves forward, such as a canter, gallop, trot, rack, pace, or walk.

GALLOP: a horse's fast three-beat gait. When your horse gallops, it seems as if you're flying!





LASSO: a rope or long thong of leather with a slip noose, used to catch horses and cattle. Roping is one of the many skills that cowboys needed in their work.

LIVESTOCK TRAILS: paths cowboys used when driving herds of livestock to market. These trails were many miles long, and a cattle drive could take several weeks to complete.

MUSTANG: a wild horse of the western plains. It is small and hardy, a descendant of horses brought to North America by the Spaniards.

RANCH: a large farm for raising horses, cattle, or sheep.

REINS: the straps used by a rider to guide a horse. The reins are fastened to a bit in the horse's mouth.

RODEO: a public contest among cowboys showing the skills they use in their work, such as riding bucking broncos and bulls, roping calves, and wrestling steers to the ground.

SADDLE: a padded and usually leather-covered seat for a horseback rider. The saddle is kept in place by straps that go around the horse's belly.





SALOON: a typical gathering place in the Wild West where people ate, played cards, listened to music, and danced.

SHERIFF: a law officer whose main jobs are to keep order and make sure no laws are being broken.

SPURS: pointed metal pieces attached to a horseback rider's boot heels. A cowboy would urge his horse by pressing the spurs into the horse's side.

STAGECOACH: a carriage, usually drawn by a six-horse team, that transported passengers and mail in the old West.

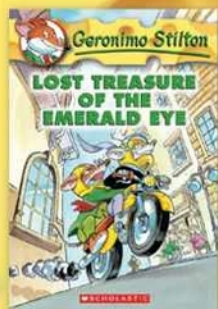
TAME: to train a wild animal so that it gets used to being around humans.

THOROUGHbred: a valuable horse whose ancestors are English mares and Arabian stallions. Thoroughbreds are light and fast, so they are used especially for racing.

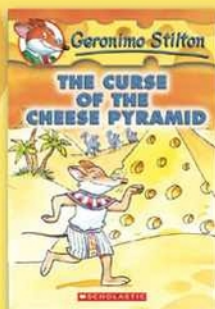
TROT: a horse's medium-fast two-beat gait. The horse moves its feet in diagonal pairs—just as humans swing their arms as they walk.



**Don't miss
any of my
fabumouse
adventures!**



**#1 Lost Treasure
of the Emerald Eye**



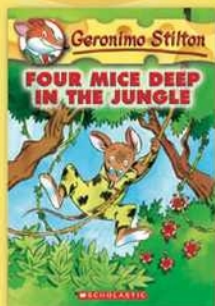
**#2 The Curse
of the Cheese
Pyramid**



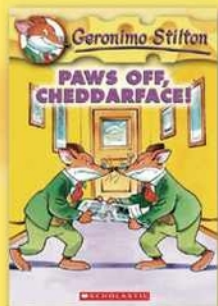
**#3 Cat and
Mouse in a
Haunted House**



**#4 I'm Too Fond
of My Fur!**



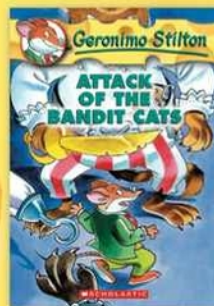
**#5 Four Mice
Deep in the Jungle**



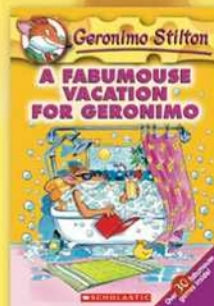
**#6 Paws Off,
Cheddarface!**



**#7 Red Pizzas for
a Blue Count**



**#8 Attack of the
Bandit Cats**



**#9 A Fabumouse
Vacation for
Geronimo**



**#10 All Because of
a Cup of Coffee**



**#11 It's
Halloween, You
'Fraidy Mouse!**



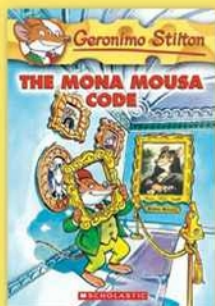
**#12 Merry
Christmas,
Geronimo!**



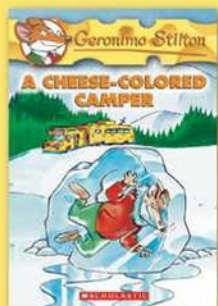
**#13 The Phantom
of the Subway**



**#14 The Temple of
the Ruby of Fire**



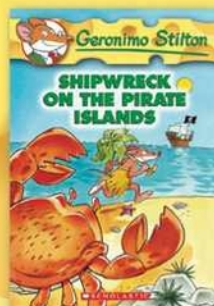
**#15 The Mona
Mousa Code**



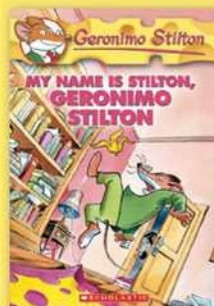
**#16 A Cheese-
Colored Camper**



**#17 Watch Your
Whiskers, Stilton!**



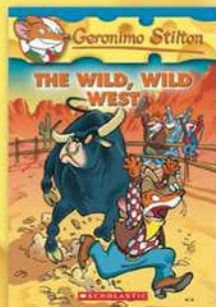
**#18 Shipwreck on
the Pirate Islands**



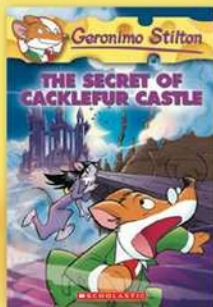
**#19 My Name Is
Stilton, Geronimo
Stilton**



#20 Surf's Up,
Geronimo!



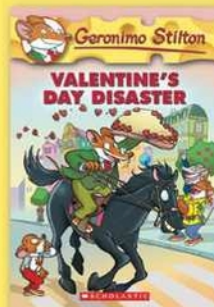
#21 The Wild,
Wild West



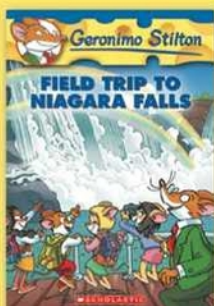
#22 The Secret
of Cacklefur
Castle



A Christmas Tale



#23 Valentine's
Day Disaster



#24 Field Trip to
Niagara Falls



#25 The Search
for Sunken
Treasure



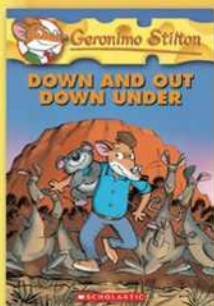
#26 The Mummy
with No Name



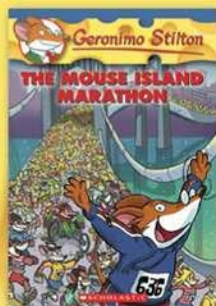
#27 The
Christmas Toy
Factory



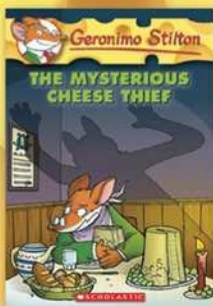
#28 Wedding
Crasher



#29 Down and
Out Down Under



#30 The Mouse
Island Marathon



#31 The
Mysterious
Cheese Thief



Christmas
Catastrophe



#32 Valley of the
Giant Skeletons



#33 Geronimo
and the Gold
Medal Mystery



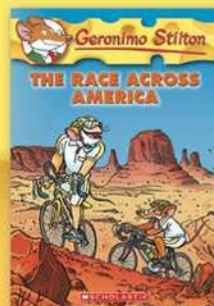
#34 Geronimo
Stilton, Secret
Agent



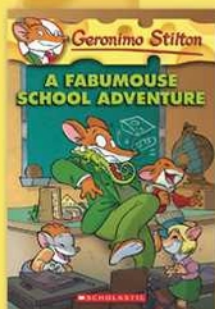
#35 A Very Merry
Christmas



#36 Geronimo's
Valentine



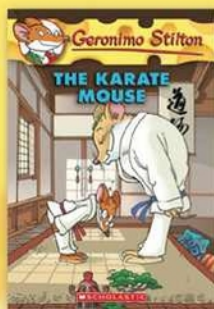
#37 The Race
Across America



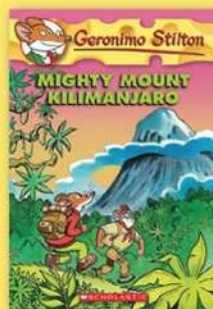
#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure



#39 Singing Sensation



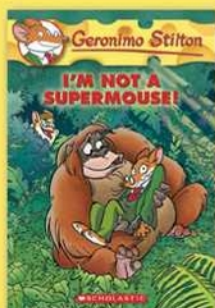
#40 The Karate Mouse



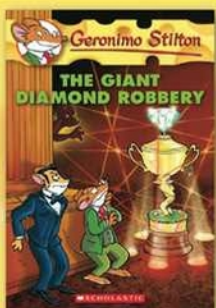
#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro



#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



#44 The Giant Diamond Robbery



#45 Save the White Whale!



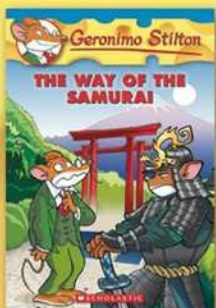
#46 The Haunted Castle



#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!



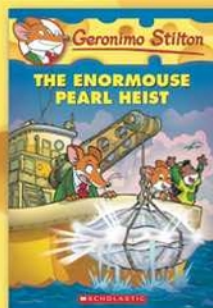
#48 The Mystery in Venice



#49 The Way of the Samurai



#50 This Hotel Is Haunted



#51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist



#52 Mouse in Space!



#53 Rumble in the Jungle



#54 Get into Gear, Stilton!



#55 The Golden Statue Plot



#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



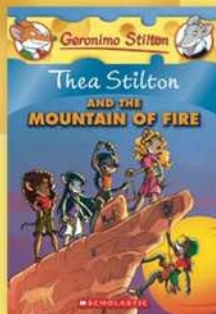
Special Edition: The Hunt for the Golden Book



**Check out
these exciting
Thea Sisters
adventures!**



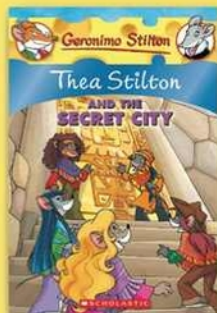
**Thea Stilton and the
Dragon's Code**



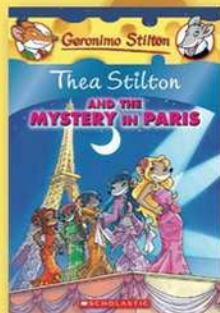
**Thea Stilton and the
Mountain of Fire**



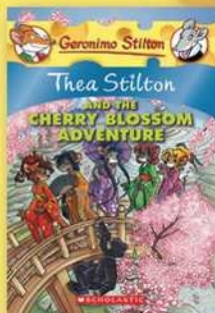
**Thea Stilton and the
Ghost of the Shipwreck**



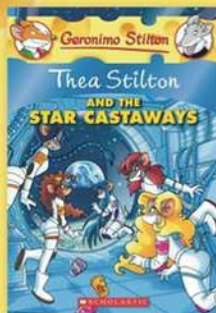
**Thea Stilton and the
Secret City**



**Thea Stilton and the
Mystery in Paris**



**Thea Stilton and the
Cherry Blossom Adventure**



**Thea Stilton and the
Star Castaways**



**Thea Stilton: Big Trouble
in the Big Apple**



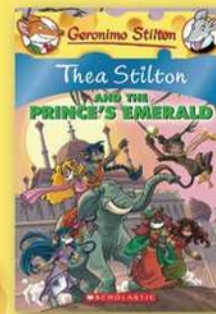
**Thea Stilton and the
Ice Treasure**



**Thea Stilton and the
Secret of the Old Castle**



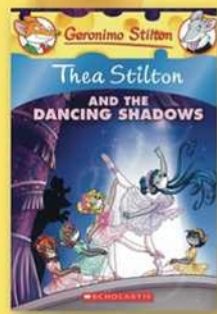
**Thea Stilton and the
Blue Scarab Hunt**



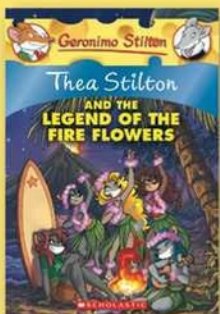
**Thea Stilton and the
Prince's Emerald**



**Thea Stilton and the Mystery
on the Orient Express**



**Thea Stilton and the
Dancing Shadows**



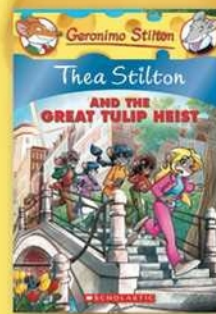
**Thea Stilton and the
Legend of the Fire
Flowers**



**Thea Stilton and the
Spanish Dance Mission**



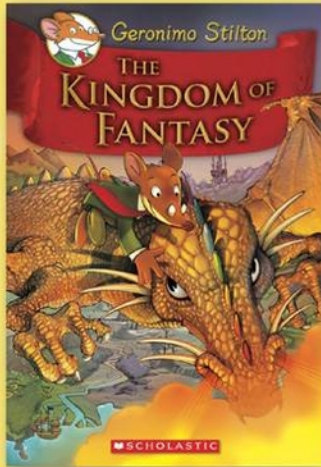
**Thea Stilton and the
Journey to the Lion's Den**



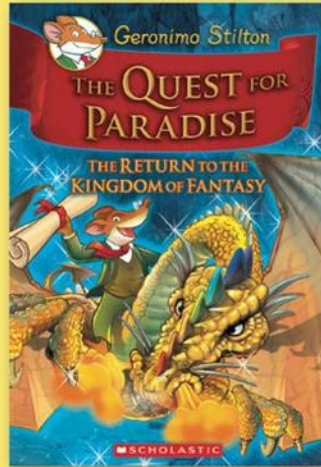
**Thea Stilton and the
Great Tulip Heist**



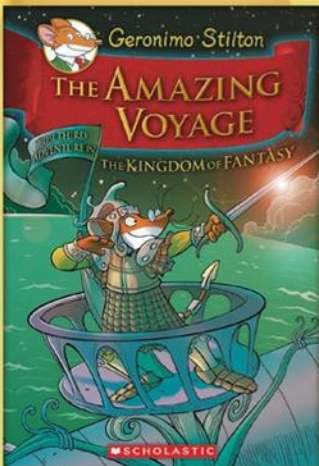
Be sure
to read all
my adventures
in the Kingdom
of Fantasy!



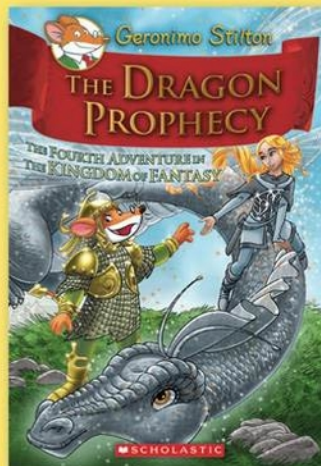
**THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



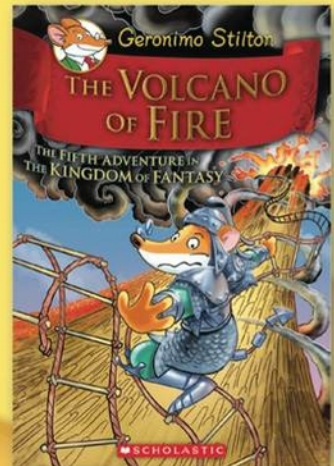
**THE QUEST FOR
PARADISE:
THE RETURN TO THE
KINGDOM OF FANTASY**



**THE AMAZING
VOYAGE:
THE THIRD ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



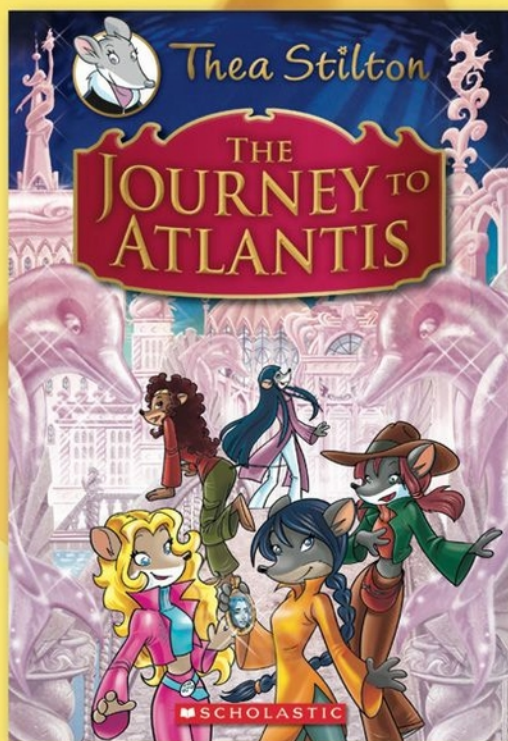
**THE DRAGON
PROPHECY:
THE FOURTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



**THE VOLCANO
OF FIRE:
THE FIFTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY**



Check out
these very
special editions
featuring me
and the Thea
Sisters!



THE JOURNEY
TO ATLANTIS

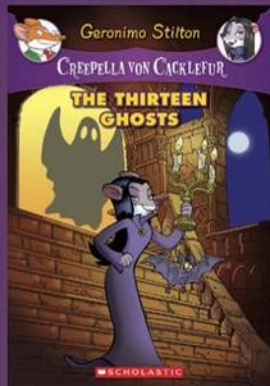


THE SECRET OF
THE FAIRIES

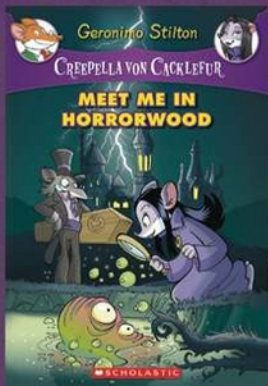


Meet CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

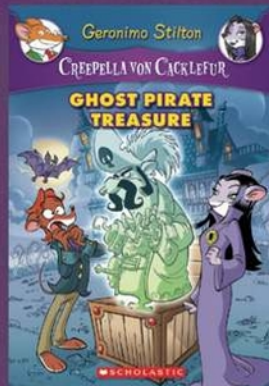
I, *Geronimo Stilton*, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as **spooky** as my friend **CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR**! She is an enchanting and **MYSTERIOUS** mouse with a pet bat named **Bitewing**. **YIKES!** I'm a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think **CREEPELLA** and her family are **AWFULLY** fascinating. I can't wait for you to read all about **CREEPELLA** in these **fa-mouse-ly funny** and **spectacularly spooky** tales!



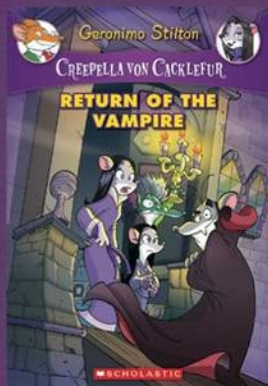
#1 The Thirteen Ghosts



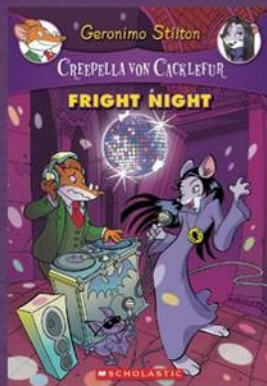
#2 Meet Me In Horrorwood



#3 Ghost Pirate Treasure



#4 Return of the Vampire

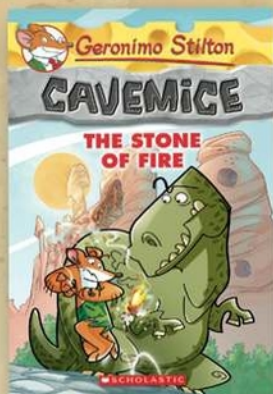


#5 Fright Night



Meet **GERONIMO STILTONOOT**

He is a cavemouse — Geronimo Stilton's ancient ancestor! He runs the stone newspaper in the prehistoric village of Old Mouse City. From dealing with dinosaurs to dodging meteorites, his life in the Stone Age is full of adventure!



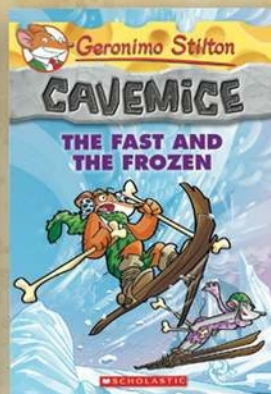
#1 The Stone of Fire



#2 Watch Your Tail!



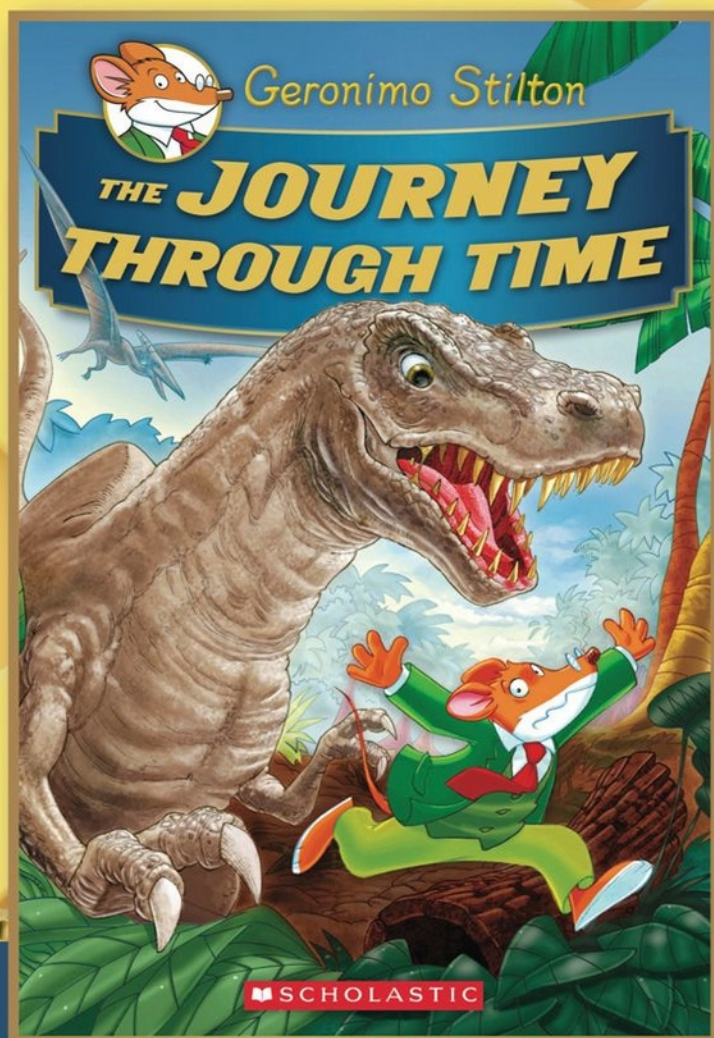
#3 Help, I'm in Hot Lava!



#4 The Fast and the Frozen



Join me and my friends on
a journey through time in
this very special edition!



THE JOURNEY
THROUGH TIME

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, **GERONIMO STILTON** is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

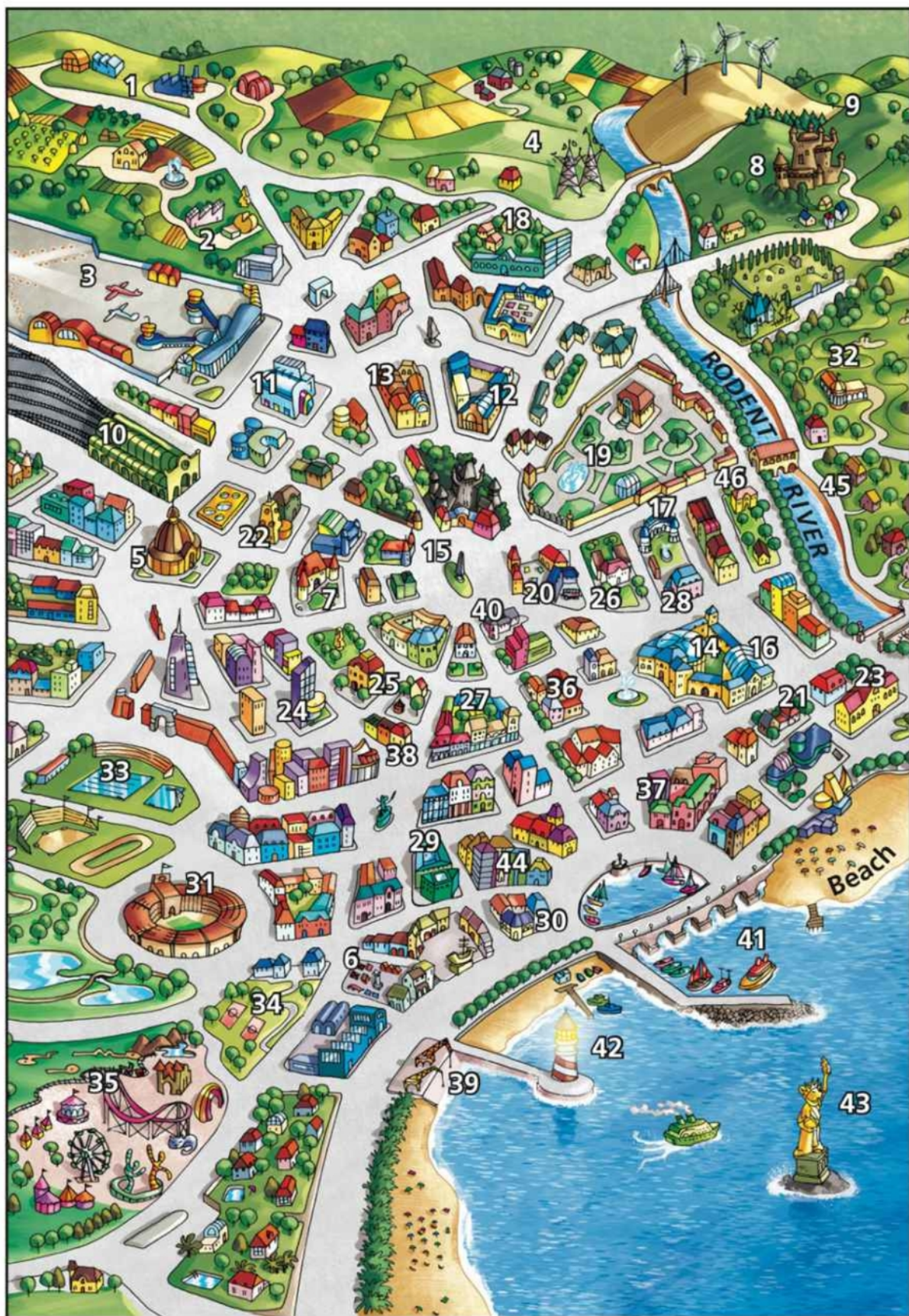
Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.



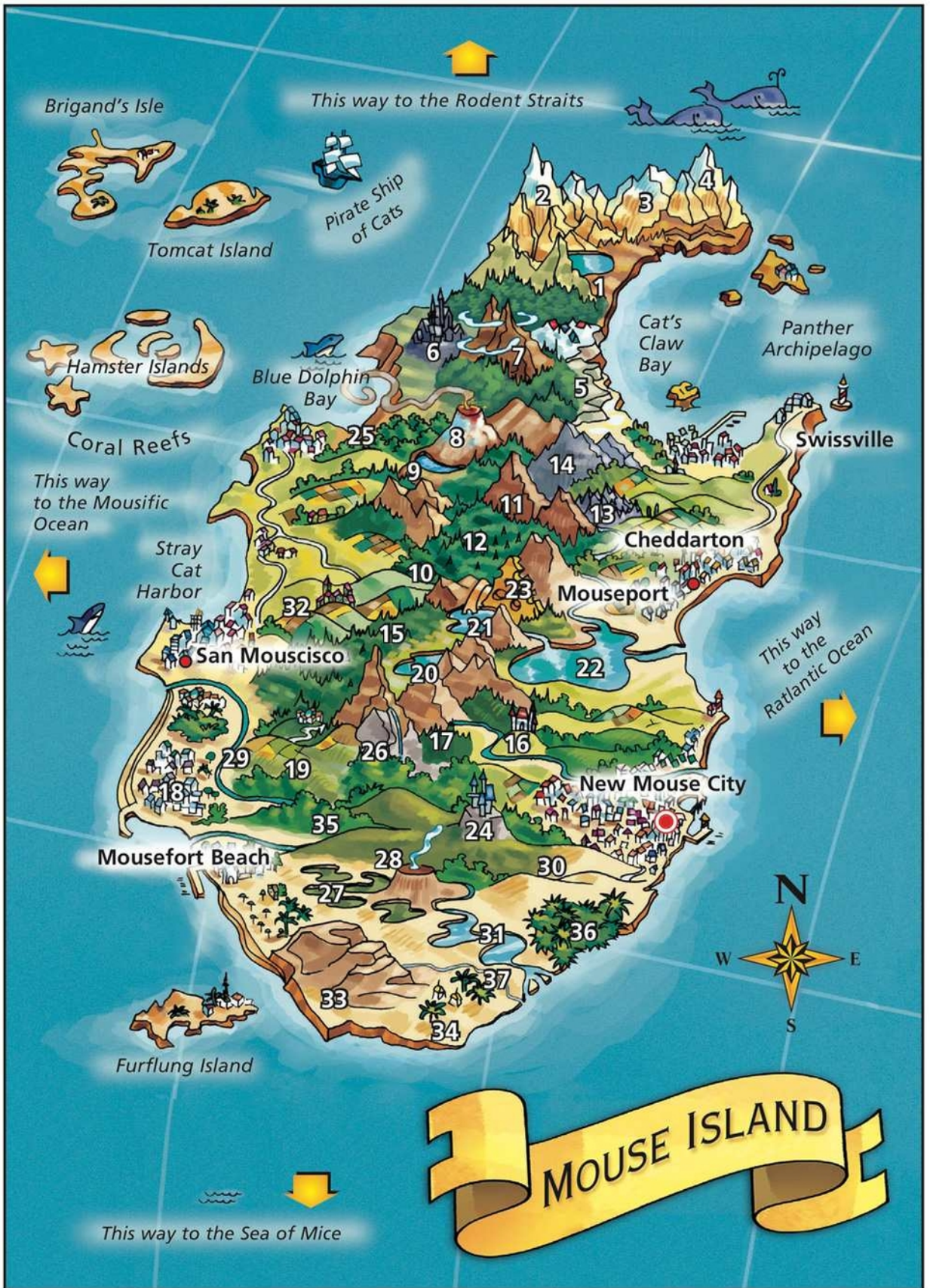
1. Main entrance
2. Printing presses (where the books and newspaper are printed)
3. Accounts department
4. Editorial room (where the editors, illustrators, and designers work)
5. Geronimo Stilton's office
6. Helicopter landing pad

*THE RODENT'S
GAZETTE*



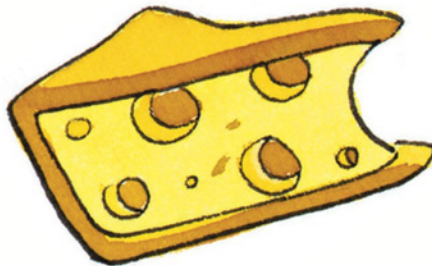
Map of New Mouse City

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Industrial Zone | 24. <i>The Daily Rat</i> |
| 2. Cheese Factories | 25. <i>The Rodent's Gazette</i> |
| 3. Angorat International Airport | 26. Trap's House |
| 4. WRAT Radio and Television Station | 27. Fashion District |
| 5. Cheese Market | 28. The Mouse House Restaurant |
| 6. Fish Market | 29. Environmental Protection Center |
| 7. Town Hall | 30. Harbor Office |
| 8. Snotnose Castle | 31. Mousidon Square Garden |
| 9. The Seven Hills of Mouse Island | 32. Golf Course |
| 10. Mouse Central Station | 33. Swimming Pool |
| 11. Trade Center | 34. Tennis Courts |
| 12. Movie Theater | 35. Curlyfur Island Amusement Park |
| 13. Gym | 36. Geronimo's House |
| 14. Catnegie Hall | 37. Historic District |
| 15. Singing Stone Plaza | 38. Public Library |
| 16. The Gouda Theater | 39. Shipyard |
| 17. Grand Hotel | 40. Thea's House |
| 18. Mouse General Hospital | 41. New Mouse Harbor |
| 19. Botanical Gardens | 42. Luna Lighthouse |
| 20. Cheap Junk for Less (Trap's store) | 43. The Statue of Liberty |
| 21. Aunt Sweetfur and Benjamin's House | 44. Hercule Poirat's Office |
| 22. Museum of Modern Art | 45. Petunia Pretty Paws's House |
| 23. University and Library | 46. Grandfather William's House |



Map of Mouse Island

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Big Ice Lake | 21. Lake Lakelake |
| 2. Frozen Fur Peak | 22. Lake Lakelakelake |
| 3. Slipperyslopes Glacier | 23. Cheddar Crag |
| 4. Coldcreeps Peak | 24. Cannycat Castle |
| 5. Ratzikistan | 25. Valley of the Giant Sequoia |
| 6. Transratania | 26. Cheddar Springs |
| 7. Mount Vamp | 27. Sulfurous Swamp |
| 8. Roastedrat Volcano | 28. Old Reliable Geyser |
| 9. Brimstone Lake | 29. Vole Vale |
| 10. Poopedcat Pass | 30. Ravingrat Ravine |
| 11. Stinko Peak | 31. Gnat Marshes |
| 12. Dark Forest | 32. Munster Highlands |
| 13. Vain Vampires Valley | 33. Mousehara Desert |
| 14. Goose Bumps Gorge | 34. Oasis of the Sweaty Camel |
| 15. The Shadow Line Pass | 35. Cabbagehead Hill |
| 16. Penny Pincher Castle | 36. Rattytrap Jungle |
| 17. Nature Reserve Park | 37. Rio Mosquito |
| 18. Las Ratayas Marinas | |
| 19. Fossil Forest | |
| 20. Lake Lake | |



Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
till the next book.
It'll be another whisker-licking-good
adventure, and that's a promise!



Geronimo Stilton



GERONIMO STILTON



THEA



TRAP



BENJAMIN

Who is Geronimo Stilton?

That's me! I run a newspaper, but my true passion is writing adventure stories. Here in New Mouse City, the capital of Mouse Island, my books are all bestsellers! My stories are funny, fa-mouse-ly funny. They are whisker-licking-good tales, and that's a promise!

THE WILD, WILD WEST

Rat-munching rattlesnakes, was I excited! I was on a wagon train to the wild, wild West. But before you could say "hi-ho, cowboy," I found myself in a showdown with the wickedest rat in all of Cactus City. All I wanted was to ride off into the sunset with the wind in my whiskers . . . but the way things were going, I'd be lucky to escape with my tail!

 **SCHOLASTIC**

[www.scholastic.com/
geronimostilton](http://www.scholastic.com/geronimostilton)

RL3 007-010